The Holy Land Today:
Preparing for the third Temple—Page 14
A letter from Jerusalem—Page 18
World events and prophecy—Page 22

Plus:
Raising the white flag—Page 10
The seven keys to history—Page 28
FOI Day at the Franklin Institute—Page 41
Dr. James A. Showers took the reins this month as president and executive director of The Friends of Israel (FOI), becoming only the fifth man to do so in the 74-year history of the organization that was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by Christians determined to help Europe’s beleaguered Jewish population.

He was appointed by the board of directors in November 2011 to succeed William E. Sutter who retired May 1 after 25 years of faithful and distinguished service. Board Chairman James P. MacLean said, “On learning of President Sutter’s decision to retire, the board, without hesitation, recognized God’s calling and direction in the matter and unanimously appointed Jim to be president and executive director as of May 1, 2012, in which position he will also serve as a member of FOI’s board of trustees.”

Jim’s personal warmth, knowledge, and wisdom, as well as his devotion to the Lord and sincere love for Israel and the Jewish people, are qualities everyone at FOI has valued from the moment he joined the organization in 2002 as director of finance, treasurer, and chief financial officer. He was later named vice president and then executive vice president.

“During Jim’s decade of exemplary service in multiple positions at FOI,” said Bill Sutter, “he has been a huge help to the ministry and a blessing to everyone. While demonstrating capable management skills ministry-wide, Jim has represented the Lord and FOI well in a wide range of public ministries.”

In 2009, in addition to his regular duties, Jim assumed the directorship of FOI’s Institute of Jewish Studies for two years. He structured its transition from a limited, traditional classroom program to a flourishing online school that now reaches all seven continents with an affordable, quality education in Bible.

Then he began developing the Hesed Project, FOI’s new adult-volunteer program in Israel, which took its first group to the Holy Land in March.

Born and raised in the home of a Baptist pastor, Jim Showers graduated from college with a degree in accounting and worked in business for 15 years, holding the positions of assistant controller, vice president of finance, and chief financial officer. He also served as seminary registrar at Baptist Bible College & Seminary in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, as well as president of the BBC Foundation, Inc. and vice president of development.

Dr. Showers earned both his master of divinity (1995) and doctor of ministry (2007) degrees from Baptist Bible Seminary. His doctoral thesis was titled “May They Prosper Who Love You: A Case for Christian Zionism.”

Dr. Showers speaks at conferences, churches, and schools nationwide; is a frequent participant in events supporting Israel; and is a strong advocate of the country’s growing Jewish-Christian alliance. He also has helped lead three joint Jewish-Christian trips to Israel and three FOI Up to Jerusalem tours.

He has been published in The Journal of Ministry & Theology, and his popular series on Replacement Theology concludes in this issue of Israel My Glory.

Jim and his wife, Diane, live in southern New Jersey and have two married children.
Israel My Glory

IN THIS ISSUE

Raising the White Flag
by Elwood McQuaid ..........10
It’s bad enough America’s courts are turning their backs on the nation’s historic values. But now something else has arisen that is just as bad—or worse.

Preparing for the Third Temple
by Jimmy DeYoung ..........14
Few people know more than Jimmy about what’s happening in Israel today to prepare for the third Temple. Excitement is in the air, as you’ll see here.

A Letter From Jerusalem: Survival Strategies for Ordinary Living
by Elliot Jager ..........18
Ever been to an outdoor market or a museum in Jerusalem? Journalist Elliot Jager takes you on a stroll through the city to see what everyday life is like for people who live there.

World Events and Prophecy
by Renald E. Showers ..........22
If you find Bible prophecy a bit confusing, this article is perfect for you! It’s clear, concise, and shows unmistakably how end-times events are right around the corner.

The Arab Revolts and Israel
by David Dolan ..........24
Most people know the face of the Middle East is changing. How did the change begin? Where is it heading? The answers are here.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Check the lineup for any new television season and you’ll find a smattering of psychic-chic pretender shows—haunting-encounter fare with ghostly figures allegedly scaring celebs and ordinary folk out of their wits—all in front of the cameras, of course. But if you’re looking for the real thing when it comes to the future and events beyond Hollywood’s fakery, you need to consult the only reliable reality source: the Word of God. We here at Israel My Glory are committed to bringing you truth from God’s Word. In this issue, contemporary Israel is our focus. You can go shopping in Jerusalem with Elliot Jager and check out preparations for the third Temple with Jimmy DeYoung. Or, if you want to take a walk back in time to the beginning, Richard Emmons will take you on a trip through creation—chart and all. Much, much more, too. Read it, and enjoy! The cover is of the Temple Mount (Duby Tal/Albatross/IsraelImages).

ALSO FEATURING

Inside View ..........4
Eye on the Middle East ..........5
Editorial ..........6
An Incentive to Pray Fervently for Israel ..........8
A More Perfect Union ..........9
Dutch State-funded TV Offers Anti-Semitic Game ..........12
They Cry in Silence ..........13
Where Is the Ark of the Covenant? ..........16
The Questions No One Asks ..........21
Ending the Palestinian ‘Right of Return’ ..........27
The Seven Keys to History, Part 1: Creation ..........28
Biblical Creation, Day by Day ..........30
Amazing Archaeological Discoveries
Affirm Jewish Claim to Land ..........32
Reich Explains the Clay Seal ..........33
The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology (Conclusion) ..........34
Iranian Details Plans to Annihilate Israel ..........35
The Book of Hebrews ..........36
The Foundations of Faith ..........38
Israel in the News ..........40
FOI Day June 23 at Franklin Institute’s Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit ..........41
Zvi ..........42

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Look for us at foi.org/digitalimg.
May 1 marks a transition in leadership at The Friends of Israel as Bill Sutter begins his retirement and I step into his role as president and executive director. We are all going to miss Bill and his tremendous contributions to the ministry.

However, transitions are a fact of life. We face them regularly. Some are minor, while others are significant. Leadership transitions fit into the significant category. Years ago I read that the number one threat to a company in business more than three years is a change in leadership. My transition marks only the fifth time The Friends of Israel has appointed a director in its 74-year history. The other changes in leadership were successful, and I expect this one to be as well.

At the same time, transition is fraught with uncertainty. What will the new leader be like? Will there be changes? Will things ever be the same? Such thinking led me to reflect on an important leadership change in the Old Testament. It came at a critical time in Israel’s history, when the Jewish people were on the precipice of entering the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 31 records that change from Moses to Joshua.

At 120 years old, Moses told the nation of Israel he was retiring as its leader (Dt. 31:1–2), having been told by God he could not enter the land (Num. 20:12). It might seem to us like an appropriate time for Moses to step down, but I’m not sure Israel was convinced.

He had led them out of slavery in Egypt, and for the past 40 years he had led them through the wilderness. Moses spoke to God face to face (Ex. 33:11; Dt. 34:10) and gave God’s words to the nation (Ex. 34:32). This appeared to be no time for a leadership change, considering the formidable task at hand was to conquer the land.

However, God had an important lesson to teach the Jewish people. His program for Israel was not dependent on one leader; rather, it was dependent on God. No leader—not even Moses, a prophet like unto our Savior (Acts 3:21–22)—was indispensable.

Over the years, The Friends of Israel has benefited from not being a personality-led ministry. Throughout its history, God has provided extremely capable men to lead; and each developed the ministry in his uniquely gifted way. Because FOI was not built on the personality of one man, it has successfully transitioned through each of the previous changes in leadership.

Moses told the Israelites God’s program for them depended on two things: God’s power to fulfill His promises and Israel’s obedience to God (Dt. 30:20; 31:3–6). Moses urged Israel to be courageous and not fear, because the people inhabiting the Promised Land were already defeated. Israel’s source of strength came from the fact that God was at their front, going before them.

What a great lesson for us today. The ministry of The Friends of Israel is a God-led one. Since 1938, we have been doing the work God has called us to do. We should not fear the leadership transition or any other challenge because God is going before us. Our responsibility is to follow Him.

Moses’ counsel to Joshua was to be strong and courageous as he led the people to follow God into the land (Dt. 31:7). God’s counsel to Joshua when he assumed leadership over Israel was to meditate on God’s Word day and night, to know it well: “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Josh. 1:8). To know God’s will, we first must know God’s Word.

I am excited and also humbled by the responsibility of being the executive director. I covet your prayers in the days to come, as we seek to honor the Lord and proclaim the biblical truth of Israel and the Messiah.

James A. Showers is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
by Steve Herzig, director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Christian Zionism—The Real Story

The heat is up on the idea of a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian dilemma. The current offensive touts a single state that eliminates Israel in favor of a Palestinian fiefdom allowing a smattering of Jews to remain as a disenfranchised minority.

Adli Sadeq, the Palestinian Authority’s ambassador to India, has been quoted as saying both the terrorist Hamas organization and Fatah, led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, utterly reject Israel’s right to exist:

They [Israelis] have a common mistake, or misconception by which they fool themselves, assuming that Fatah accepts them and recognizes the right of their state to exist, and that it is Hamas alone that loathes them and does not recognize the right of this state to exist. They ignore the fact that this state, based on a fabricated [Zionist] enterprise, never had any shred of a right to exist.

Strange though it may seem, facsimiles of Sadeq’s declaration are showing up across the United States. At the “One State Conference” held in March at Harvard, anti-Israel academic elites and their acolytes declared Israel’s right to life null and void.

Professor Susan M. Akram of Boston University’s School of Law articulated the essence of the hatefest:

Israel’s claim of a state on the basis of exclusive and discriminatory rights to Jews, has never been juridically recognized. In other words, the concept of the Jewish people as a national entity with extraterritorial claims has never been recognized under international law.

Closer to home for Zionist Christians were remarks made at the 2012 National Penn Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Conference held at the University of Pennsylvania. Among the bevy of radical speakers was the Reverend Grayland Hagler, a Protestant minister and firebrand activist known for rallying anti-Israel elements to “stand up together until we dismantle the State of Israel.” With such a predisposition to Israel’s destruction, it is not surprising he told a questioner, “One of the things I am constantly doing is trying to disengage Christians from Hebrew Scriptures.”

Facts About Zionist Christians

Technically, anyone who believes God’s promises to the Jewish people are irrevocable is a biblical Zionist. Furthermore, you cannot disengage the Hebrew Scriptures from the rest of the Bible. The Old and New Testaments compose a unit with unbreakable continuity—which is why Christian Zionists believe the following regarding Jewish rights:

Biblically. It is beyond dispute that, if you accept the integrity of biblical revelation, you cannot deny Israel’s central role in the scheme of things. When, for instance, God calls His promise of a land for the children of Abraham through Isaac “everlasting” (Gen. 17:7–8), He means everlasting. When He promises to bless those who bless Israel (12:1–3), He means precisely that. When He promises Israel will survive even under the most adverse circumstances (Ezek. 11:16–17; Rom. 11:2), there is no rational alternative for thinking otherwise.

The Bible says the Jewish people would return to their ancient land and experience a national resurrection (Jer. 32:37–41); and, against all odds, that promise is now a reality. What God says, He means. And if these promises are reduced to allegories, myths, and old wives’ tales, faith collapses—and we are without hope.

Historically. To argue, as revisionists do, that there has never been an appreciable Jewish presence in the Middle East, that there were no Jewish Temples on Mount Moriah, or that the Holocaust was a Jewish contrivance is hardly worthy of serious comment. The stones cry out, and their message certifies the facts of both Jewish and world history.

Morally. In view of centuries of dispersions and persecutions, deprivation, and slaughter, it is incomprehensible to argue the Jewish people do not have a right to their homeland. With at least 50 Muslim majority countries in the world, to rant against one Jewish country is beyond reprehensible; it is morally criminal.

Legally. Those who love to hate Israel and congratulate themselves on motivating crusaders to dismantle the Jewish state’s so-called apartheid occupation forces have inoculated themselves with a heaping dose of willful ignorance. Israel is a legal member of the international community. Witness the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the San Remo Conference of 1920, the UN Partition Plan of 1947. Astonishingly, accusations that the Jewish people stole “Palestine,” a never-has-been national entity, carry more weight than the certified credentials of the Jewish state.

Behind such twisted politics is a debilitating malignancy: anti-Semitism. Call Christian Zionists what you will, but they will never be associated with hatred of the Jewish people or denial of the Jewish right to the land of Israel.
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Associate Editor: David M. Levy
Contributing Editors: Peter Colón • Steve Herzig
Craig L. Parshall • Renald E. Showers • Thomas C. Simcox
Publications Manager: Diana Veasey
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Naftali Bennett, chief of staff to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from 2006 to 2008, said Israelis are “more concerned now than ever about Iran’s race to acquire a nuclear bomb.” To plead with Israel’s closest ally, America, to let Israel defend itself, he has created a video that he asked to be distributed.

In the video, he says America and Europe are telling Israel, “Do not bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities.” This is understandable. They don’t want a regional war that may occur as a result of an Israeli attack; and they don’t need oil prices to skyrocket, certainly not during an election year. Those who oppose an Israeli preemptive attack provide a few arguments.”

Following is a transcription of Mr. Bennett’s message to America:

First, they say that, while Iran wants a bomb, it doesn’t actually want to use it. Their [the Iranians’] only goal is to gain regional power, but they don’t really intend to bomb Israel.

That’s an interesting theory, but let’s listen to what Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad actually says in his own words.

On October 26, 2005, he said, “Israel must be wiped off the map.”

On August 2, 2006, he asked, “Are they human beings? They’re a group of bloodthirsty savages.” He was referring to us, Israelis.

On May 8, 2008, he declared that Israel has reached the end, like a dead rat.

On October 10, 2009, he screamed, “The shout of the Iranian nation is forever! Death to Israel!”

On March 11, 2010, he concluded, “Israel will be annihilated.”

I think we can all agree that he’s pretty clear about his goals. If there’s one lesson from the Holocaust, it is this: When someone says he’s going to annihilate you, believe him.

So, yes, we believe Ahmadinejad. But then goes the argument, perhaps Iran does want to bomb Israel; but it won’t do it because Israel would retaliate. In other words, mutually assured destruction would work as a deterrent, just as it did with the Soviet Union.

Well, again, let’s listen to what Iran has to say. Iran’s former president, Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, said he wasn’t concerned about fallout from an attack on Israel because, in his words, “The application of an atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel. But if Israel bombed Iran, it would produce only limited damage.” And he goes on explaining. Israel is much smaller than Iran in landmass and, therefore, far more vulnerable to nuclear attack.

You see, since Iran has 70 million people and Israel only has 7 million, Rafsanjani believes Iran could survive an exchange of nuclear bombs, while Israel would be annihilated. But it actually goes a bit further. According to Iran’s radical religion, at the end of time there’s going to be general and total destruction, a sort of Armageddon. People with this fanatic mindset actually want to die as martyrs, so you can’t really threaten them with death. But then goes the argument, as The New York Times said, even if Israel did bomb Iran, they would only set its nuclear program back for a few years. So what’s the point?

Well, come on! When somebody’s pointing a gun at you and he’s about to press the trigger, then stopping him for just a few years is a pretty good deal. And during those few years, we’d have many new opportunities to solve this problem altogether. But if, on the other hand, they do get a nuclear bomb, that’s it. There’s no way back.

The final argument against an attack is that, if worst comes to worst, we Israelis can be assured that the West, and especially America, would be there to protect us. Well, somehow, that’s a bit hard for us to believe. Let’s take a look at Israel’s short history.

In 1948, during Israel’s War of Independence, we were invaded by five Arab armies. And we were very low on weapons and ammunition. The UN imposed an embargo; and the entire world, including America, refused to sell any weapons to Israel. We were on our own.

In May of 1967, when Egypt, Syria, and Jordan teamed up on Israel and blockaded us, what did the United Nations do? They pulled out their forces from Sinai, the very forces that were there to protect Israel in the first place. Egypt asked them to leave, so they got up and left. Again, we were left on our own.

On the morning of October 6 of 1973, Israel discovered that, within a few hours, it would be attacked by Egypt and Syria. The logical thing for us would have been to preempt and attack first. But the U.S. sent us a clear message: Do not preempt. So we waited, and we were attacked by them first. This cost us thousands of our soldiers’ lives in the Yom Kippur War.

The entire world, except America, refused to help us, while in many cases aiding the Arabs.

So it’s pretty clear that when push comes to shove, we’re on our own. Yes, America is Israel’s greatest friend. But when it comes to our very survival, we can only trust ourselves to defend our lives.

So what we ask our best friend, America, is to help us and the entire world to stop this global threat. Please do everything you can to stop Iran from getting the bomb. But if you’re not going to do it, please, please don’t stand in our way.
Radical New Testament critic John Dominic Crossan, touted by his publisher as being “widely regarded as the foremost historical Jesus scholar of our time,” has written a new book called The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction about Jesus. The title is an apt description of his stilted premise, and I found the book both disturbing and astonishing.

For more than 30 years I’ve spent my time in courtrooms as a trial lawyer, a profession that involves evaluating evidence. Such an enterprise always involves an attempt to recreate a recent historical set of facts: the murder of an unfortunate victim, the circumstances of an automobile collision, a business deal gone sour. Getting to the truth is important, and therefore the way lawyers tell the “story” of those events in court both requires and deserves codified rules of evidence.

Let’s examine the most important story about the most important events in world history: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One would assume any scholar’s treatment of that subject should be held to the most exacting historical standard possible.

Crossan’s book is astonishing because he concludes all four Gospels are actually a collection of parables about Jesus—make-believe metaphors rather than facts. So, why should we believe them? Because, he says, Jesus was a historical figure even if we cannot know much about Him.

What we do know, he says, is that Jesus lived a remarkable life, having “cooperated fully with God.” Thus he concludes, “And if one, why not others?” Therefore, Jesus’ life—a mere vapor of uncertainty, according to the author—has only the power of some vague moral example for us today. And apparently, Crossan thinks we should be content with that.

But Christians are not, nor should they be. Crossan’s book focuses on the literary form of the parable, which our Savior indeed used as a teaching tool. But Crossan uses it to explain everything the New Testament says about the life of Christ, reducing the Gospels and Epistles to mere religious fiction about an unknown, but intriguing, historical figure.

As a novelist, when I devise a plotline and fill it in with characters and dialogue, I know I am writing fiction, even if some elements were inspired by actual events. Any sane writer knows the difference. And so did the New Testament writers.

What Crossan describes as a collection of mere religious parables resulted in the authors being beheaded, burned alive, and crucified upside down—clearly a price no writer is willing to pay for works of mere fiction.

I am constantly amazed brilliant men like John Dominic Crossan are willing to go to the most extraordinary lengths to deny the plain words of Scripture. The New Testament writers emphasized that their descriptions of Christ’s life were based on eyewitness evidence, not moral metaphors. Luke explained his Gospel was based on facts “handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses” and that it was the result of his “having investigated everything carefully from the beginning,” so the reader could “know the exact truth” about Jesus (Lk. 1:2–4, NASB).

The apostle Peter stressed he and the other disciples were “eyewitnesses” and boldly declared their accounts were not “cunningly devised fables” (2 Pet. 1:16). The apostle Paul urged early Christians to avoid following myths and fables (1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 4:4; Ti. 1:14).

It could not be clearer: These men, moved by the Holy Spirit and transformed by their encounters with Jesus Christ, were not creating some first-century version of The Da Vinci Code. Their testimonies are corroborated both by their high regard for the standards of evidence and the risk to their own lives.

Sadly, Crossan is like many other smart scholars who insist on seeking natural explanations for the miraculous life of Christ. As a result, he used the obtuse, complex formulas of reason within his own discipline to, in effect, put reason to death.

Another intellectual committed the same error. Jesus told Nicodemus only through faith in Him and by the spiritual new birth that results can anyone see the Kingdom of God. “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?” Jesus asked (Jn. 3:10). Nicodemus, no doubt a brilliant teacher, later had a turnaround of faith. He risked his reputation by protesting the unfairness of Jesus’ trial and then risked his life by participating in His anointed burial. We can only pray for a similar change of mind and heart for all the modern-day Nicodemuses out there.

Craig L. Parshall is senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters.
The banner hung in the gymnasium at Cranston High School West in Cranston, Rhode Island, for 49 years before Jessica Ahlquist came along. A 16-year-old self-described atheist since age 10, Jessica took offense and sued for its removal. Predictably, the American Civil Liberties Union pressed the case, and on January 11
U.S. District Court Judge Ronald Lagueux ordered the banner removed.

Miss Ahlquist, who hadn’t noticed the wall-hanging until a friend pointed it out during her freshman year, said it made her feel ostracized and excluded. Here is how it read:

_Our Heavenly Father,
Grant us each day the desire to do our best,
To grow mentally and morally as well as physically,
To be kind and helpful to our classmates and teachers,
To be honest with ourselves as well as with others.
Help us to be good sports and smile when we lose as well as when we win.
Teach us the value of true friendship.
Help us always to conduct ourselves so as to bring credit to Cranston High School West.
_Amen

The banner was a gift to the school from its first graduating class in 1963, and for nearly 50 years it offered students a menu of admirable aspirations no one found objectionable. Indeed, who could disapprove of the lofty moral, intellectual, and social ideals it upheld? No one—until a single student took umbrage to the words Our Heavenly Father and Amen.

And that is where the battle lines are formed. America is at war within, and the final consequences of this conflict will far outweigh any military or political contests currently confronting the nation. A war on God is raging. One by one, decisions being made around the country—decisions that their attack forces in liberal courtrooms to push their no-God-left-standing agenda.

_Retreat or Surrender_

Leading the retreat from traditional American values are people whom the Bible calls “blind guides,” egoists so clueless they “strain out a gnat and swallow a camel” (Mt. 23:24). They believe no sacrifice is too great when trying to placate those annoyed with their existence.

The latest among them are the producers of new Bible translations claiming to be “Muslim-friendly.” Their idea is to enhance Muslim-Christian relations by altering or eliminating terminology Islamists find distasteful. References to God as “Father” and to Jesus as “Son” or “Son of God” are reportedly being excised. Joel Richardson of WND (formerly WorldNetDaily), an independent news company, reported, ‘According to [Joshua] Lingel, who can be contacted at info@i2ministries.org, the crisis in translation methodology is largely due to “a postmodern literary bias” that has crept into some translation circles in recent decades. Such translations would seem to demand that the divine author of the Bible change rather than the Muslim reader.’

“That the divine author of the Bible change rather than the Muslim reader” is the sticking point, a concession that will generate more contempt than compatibility. To believe that changing biblical terminology will promote harmony between the religions is either an incredible display of naiveté or a blatant disrespect for the sanctity of God’s Word. Though many Muslims may wish to live in peace alongside Christians, the essence tenets of Islam eliminate that possibility. Islam is a triumphalism religion; it is not a compliant, pluralist denomination as we are accustomed to in America. The dream of Islamist purists is to make America and the West Shari’a (Muslim law) compliant and transform democracies into Muslim-dominated societies. No amount of cajoling or compromise will alter that fact.

A church leader in Bangladesh reportedly believes one of the problems with Muslim-friendly translations is they enhance the Muslim argument that Christians are liars who change their Bibles only to deceive Muslims.

Also at issue is the rise of a syncretic religion, Chrislam, in America. Born in Africa during the 1980s, the heretical movement proposes a union between Christianity and Islam that will put the Qur’an alongside Bibles in church pews and promote the teachings of Muhammad, as well as Christianity, from pulpits. Serious questions are being raised about the size and growth of Chrislam and the problems it will bring.

These leaps into a world of emasculated Christianity are examples of surrendering to expediency. We are mainstreaming dissident minorities at the expense of eternal values, and we will reap eternal consequences.

_Ecumencial Dementia_

In a world devoid of absolutes, particularly regarding divine authority, the path of least resistance may seem reasonable. That path is inherent in the culture created by the radical religious “liberators” of the 1920s. Typical of Bible-hostile Protestant theologians was Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878–1969) who opined from his New York City pulpit in May 1922 that belief in the virgin birth was nonessential, the inerrancy of Scripture was not credible, and the literal Second Coming of Christ was outmoded. Ecumenical conclaves were notable for sidetracking or forsaking essentials in favor of a convictionless harmony that accomplished little more than to record irrelevant opinions. Unfortunately, the consequence of spiritual leaders becoming militant, “religious,” agnostic secularists is devastating. In America it has opened the gates to a revolution that tolerates every radical eruption from the “God is dead” folly to today’s all-out war to expunge God’s name from every aspect of American life. Caught in the middle of this unbridled, hateful, anti-God fury are Bible-believing Christians—now being tagged as radical, dangerous purveyors of bigotry and divisiveness.

Two years ago I wrote about a cross that had stood in the Mojave Desert in the western part of the United States for more than 70 years. (See “The Cross in the Desert” in the January/February 2010 issue.) The Veterans of Foreign Wars had erected the memorial in 1934 as a tribute to veterans of World War I. But when someone objected to the cross being on public land, a federal court of appeals ruled in 2004 that it had to come down.

The matter went to the U.S. Supreme Court; and until the court overturned the ruling, the cross was boxed to keep it out of sight. It seemed eerily ironic that the Cranston High banner was also ordered covered while school officials decided whether to appeal. Imagine the effrontery. Because of the bigotry of two people—a high school student and a desert-drive-by atheist—symbols revered by millions of American Christians for nearly 250 years, as well as by Christians everywhere for two millennia, had to be covered and hidden from sight. The insult is obvious. Yet outrage over such trampling of sacred values is virtually nonexistent.

Compare the reaction to the deliberate desecration of God’s name here in America with the events in Afghanistan in February. The inadvertent burning of Qur’ans fueled an Islamic firestorm that led to murder and mayhem in the streets. Our Lord and His Book have brought Christians to a higher standard: compassion, mercy, and reasonable tolerance toward those who differ with us. However,
there are limits to how long this will be the case if the crusade to dismantle our sacred heritage continues. The future doesn’t look promising. And we will do well to remember that once God is displaced, the inevitable result is chaos.

The Divine Caveat

Scripture tells us and history repeatedly demonstrates God is long-suffering. But it also warns us He is not long-suffering forever. You cannot make war with the sovereign Creator and win. The greatest of human errors is to believe independence from God will bring a better world.

The mood among dissenters might best be described as Babel-esque. In the tower of Babel incident recorded in Genesis 11, the ancients made a calculated decision to go it alone and create a society forged on human independence, man-made religion, and humanly crafted self-sufficiency. It didn’t take God long to obliterate their efforts and leave them with the unhappy consequences.

In reality, all God deniers have ridden the wave of that philosophy. They believe in a sham Shangri-la that is merely a delusional declaration of independence and a one-way ticket to catastrophe.

How far things will go before God exercises His prerogative to set things right is anybody’s guess. But given today’s exploding tyranny of the minority, we may soon find out.

ENDNOTE


Dutch public-broadcasting network now offers viewers a board game featuring Israeli settlers who use “Jewish stinginess” and “the Anne Frank card” to colonize the West Bank.

Organizations combating anti-Semitism have called on the Dutch government to persuade the network, VPRO, to halt the downloading of the board game. A VPRO representative claims the game is not anti-Semitic but, rather, a thought-provoking satire.


In the game, the user is a settler trying to expand his community and mine diamonds and Dead Sea mud while producing textiles and bulldozers. Players can use the “Jewish stinginess” card to force competitors to hand over resources. The instructions refer three times to the “nation’s typical mercantile spirit.”

Terrorist attacks are described as a natural result of settlement expansion. “Saw wood, and you get wood chips: Not everyone’s happy with the Israeli settlements. Least of all the terrorist,” the instructions explain. “Terrorist attacks” cost players resources.

The settler may also use the “Mahmoud Ahmadinejad card” to avoid losing resources to a terrorist and simultaneously draw resources from other players. The Anne Frank House is a “winning point” for the settler.

Anne Frank was a Jewish girl from Amsterdam who perished at age 15 at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. She is known around the world through her best-selling book, The Diary of Anne Frank, published after her death. Ahmadinejad, of course, is the president of Iran who has vowed to annihilate Israel and the Jewish people.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has strongly condemned VPRO for publishing the “disturbing” game. “It would be more likely as a product of neo-Nazis or Ahmadinejad,” Dr. Shimon Samuels, the center’s director for international relations, told The Jerusalem Post.

References to Jewish stinginess, the exploitation of minerals, and the “contemptuous misuse” of Anne Frank’s House as a “winning point” were “anti-Semitic tropes,” Samuels said.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science provided 89 percent of VPRO’s budget of 51.9 million euros in 2010. “This funding makes the Netherlands the largest financier of hate incitement among youth in Europe,” Samuels said.

by The Jerusalem Post
Suicide Bombers Attack Church in Nigeria. Two suicide bombers from the Boko Haram Islamist sect drove a car laden with bombs into the worship service of a Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) congregation recently, killing at least one Christian and injuring 38 others. COCIN is one of the largest evangelical Christian denominations in Nigeria.

The Islamists broke through a security barrier at the church’s gate. Church member Felix Apollos said members of a security force at the gate tried to stop the assailants, but soldiers also guarding the church ordered them to allow the bombers onto the premises.

Boko Haram seeks to impose a strict version of Sharia law on Nigerians. Boko Haram translates loosely as “Western education is forbidden.” The group has bombed many COCIN congregations recently and last year murdered the Rev. David Usman.

Christians make up 51.3 percent of Nigeria’s 158.2 million population. The rest are Muslims.

Iranian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani Still Alive. At press time, lawyers for Iranian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani had not received official word their client will be executed.

The case is before Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. The lower court can still issue an execution order, but Khamenei has authority to block it.

Nadarkhani faces death for leaving Islam. He has been in prison since October 2009. Although the court declared Nadarkhani was not a practicing Muslim before his conversion, it still found him guilty of apostasy due to his Muslim ancestry.

Some Iranian Christians say the key to their freedom is continued pressure from the international community.

Pakistani Christian Charged With Blasphemy. A judge has denied bail to 23-year-old Khurram Masih, charged with desecrating the Qur’an despite the lack of evidence against him. Masih, a Christian, said he was falsely accused because of an argument with his Muslim landlord over rent.

Asif Aqeel, executive director of the Community Development Initiative, an affiliate of the European Centre for Law and Justice, told Compass Direct News trial courts in blasphemy cases tend to deliver guilty verdicts due to Muslim pressure. Masih faces life in prison.

Falsely accusing Christians of blasphemy is commonplace in Muslim countries.

Turkish Christians Attacked. Christians in Turkey continue to suffer attacks from private citizens, discrimination by lower-level government officials, and vilification in both school textbooks and news media, according to a study by a Protestant group.

In its annual “Report on Human Rights Violations,” the country’s Association of Protestant Churches noted mixed indicators of improvement but pointed to a “root of intolerance” in Turkish society toward adherents of non-Islamic faiths.

The report documented 12 attacks against Christians in 2011, including incidents in which individuals were beaten in Istanbul for sharing their faith, church members were threatened, and church buildings attacked. None of the attackers have been charged.

The report also identified state policies that single out Christian children for harassment or vilification. A civics book used for eighth graders characterizes “missionary activities” as a national threat.

Many of the more horrific attacks, such as the 2007 torture and killing of three Christians in Malatya, have been linked to members of nationalist movements. The criminal case into the murders continues without a court ruling.

An estimated 120,000 Christians live in Turkey, of which 3,000 are Protestants. Sunni Muslims make up close to 99 percent of the country’s 75 million people, according to United Nations’ population figures.

Christian Beheaded in Somalia. Islamic extremists from the rebel al Shabaab organization in Somalia have beheaded another Christian outside Mogadishu. His body was left for 20 hours before nomads found it and carried it into Mogadishu, sources said.

Zakaria Hussein Omar, 26, worked for a Christian humanitarian organization that al Shabaab banned in 2011. “He was sharing with me his life as a Christian,” said a friend of his. “Last year he mentioned to me that his life was in danger.”

In 2011 the militants beheaded a 17-year-old Christian near Mogadishu and another in southwestern Somalia. They have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity and impose strict Sharia law.

Compiled from reports by Compass Direct News.
Preparing for the Third

The Rapture of the church is the next main event on God’s timetable of prophetic activities. No prophecies have yet to be fulfilled before the Rapture can take place. It is imminent; it can happen at any moment. In fact, nothing but the long-suffering grace and mercy of God prevents it from occurring right now.

However, though there are no signs for the Rapture, there is at least one major indicator it is close at hand. That sign is the status of preparations for the next Jewish Temple to be built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Nachman Kahane, 75, a leading rabbi in Jerusalem, believes a Temple will be built on the Temple Mount in his lifetime; and he says everything is ready to build that Temple today.

The world has known only two Jewish Temples: The first, built on the Temple Mount by King Solomon, stood for 390 years before the Babylonians destroyed it in 586 B.C. The second, built after the Babylonian Captivity on the same site (Ezra 2:68; 6:7), stood for 585 years before being destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The end-times scenario in God’s prophetic Word calls for a Jewish Temple to be standing when the Antichrist rules the world.

Rabbi Kahane trained everyone who leads the effort to rebuild; and it was his students who started the Temple Institute in 1987 in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem’s Old City. The Institute has trained men for Temple service and accumulated all the implements needed for a Temple, including the table of showbread, altar of incense, and golden menorah. The menorah, currently on display overlooking the Western Wall plaza in Jerusalem, is covered with 95 pounds of pure gold and reportedly is worth $2 million.

Many think the original menorah, a seven-branched candelabra, was...
Temple

carried off to Rome after the second Temple was destroyed because a carving on the Arch of Titus in Rome seems to display exactly that. The original menorah may still be in Rome. The Temple Institute has painstakingly reconstructed it.

Although the Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism, Jewish people are not allowed to pray there or go up in large groups because it is controlled by the Muslim Waqf. Israel gave the Waqf control as a gesture of goodwill after the city’s reunification in 1967.

Rabbi Glick is calling for Jewish people to unite and make every effort to visit this sacred location and focus on rebuilding the Temple. For a number of years, he directed the Temple Institute’s effort to get ready to rebuild.

Gershon Salomon’s Temple Mount Faithful have a cornerstone ready for when construction begins. It is said to have been consecrated with water from the biblical pool of Siloam and cut with diamonds.

Near Jericho in the Jordan Valley, a training center educates men who believe themselves to be from the tribe of Levi and the priestly family in how to serve in the next Temple. Over the past 25 years it has trained thousands from around the world.

Many of the priestly garments are prepared and in storage. Rabbi Kahane, who received the first set of priestly garments, has his hanging in his closet, ready to be put on in a moment’s notice. It took years of research to make these garments:

Special flaxen thread was imported from India and overseas travel was necessary to obtain the correct colors for the clothes, including to Istanbul, to purchase mountain worms from which the correct shade of crimson is derived. The secret of the correct shade of blue has been lost since the destruction of the Second Temple, . . . until the Ptil Tekhelet nonprofit organization identified it as the murex trunculus, aka hexaplex trunculus, the banded dye-murex found near the Mediterranean Sea.¹

In addition, the 4,000 harps needed for the Levites to play the Temple music as called for by King David in 1 Chronicles 23:5 are close to being completed by the craftsmen at the House of Harrari.

Rabbi Yoel Keren believes the third Temple will be built following the details in Ezekiel 40—46; but first the Jewish people will construct a less extravagant structure, as they did when the second Temple was built 2,500 years ago.

What Lies Ahead

The end-times scenario in God’s prophetic Word calls for a Jewish Temple to be standing when the Antichrist rules the world. He will desecrate it, and the Jewish people will again be forced off the Temple Mount because they will remain faithful to God and refuse to worship the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27).

In His Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24—25), Jesus confirmed Daniel’s prophecy. He called the desecration the “abomination of desolation” and said it had not yet taken place (24:15).

Someday Messiah Jesus will return to Jerusalem and build His Temple on this sacred piece of real estate (Zech. 1:16; 6:12); and from that Millennial Temple, He will rule the world (6:13).

That Temple is described in vivid, precise detail in Ezekiel 40—46. Nothing built so far fits Ezekiel’s description. Not the Tabernacle, not the first Temple built by King Solomon, not even the second Temple that was dedicated by Zerubbabel and magnificently refurbished by Herod the Great. Even the structure on the drawing board today will not be that Temple; rather, it will be the Tribulation Temple that must be operational at the midpoint of the seven-year period called the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

There is one major obstacle to building the third Temple: the gold-domed Muslim Dome of the Rock, which occupies the Temple Mount. This is not a mosque, but it is an Islamic building. Some people suggest a Jewish Temple

Other Activities

Rabbi Yehuda Glick, chairman of the Temple Mount Heritage Foundation, leads Jewish tours onto the Temple Mount to increase familiarity with this holiest of Jewish places before the next Temple is built. He recently lead an educational tour of 10 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) paratroopers in what marked the first time uniformed IDF troops have been on the Temple Mount in a decade. Paratroopers, said Rabbi Glick, have a “special relationship” to the Temple Mount. They took that hill for Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War, which led to the reunification of Jerusalem.

In addition, the Temple Institute also believes it knows the location of the Ark of the Covenant, which was last seen in Solomon’s Temple. Two rabbis and a Jewish activist, all working toward building the third Temple, say they have been to the location. (See “Where Is the Ark of the Covenant?” page 16.)
could exist alongside it, both sharing the Temple Mount. But I’ve spoken to many leaders in the movement to rebuild who believe the Dome of the Rock must be removed. When I ask them how they plan to make that happen, they say they don’t. They plan to leave that detail to the Messiah, but they plan to be ready to start construction when He clears the way.

Are you prepared for the Rapture of the church? If you are, live purely and productively so that you will be filled with joy when you hear the glorious sound of the trumpet of God calling us home (1 Th. 4:15–17). I awake every morning with the expectation that today will be the day. In light of all that is happening to prepare for a Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount, we would do well to keep our ears open for the Lord’s shout, the archangel’s voice, and the trumpet call of God.

**ENDNOTE**

1. Danielle Kubes, “Third Temple Preparations Begin

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### Where Is the Ark of the Covenant?

There has been much speculation over the location of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark—whose design was given by God to Moses—was constructed of acacia wood plated with gold and contained the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them. It was built during the Exodus and was in the holy place of the Tabernacle. Later it was placed in the Holy of Holies in the Temple Solomon built. Central to Temple worship, it would be sprinkled with blood once a year on Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—first for the sins of the high priest and then for the sins of the nation of Israel.

But where is it now, and when was it removed from the Temple? There have been many reports as to its location, including television specials and feature films. Some speculate it was taken to Ethiopia. Others say it was carried off to Rome. Still others claim it was stolen by Babylon and Egypt. These two empires were battling each other at the time, and Israel was caught in the middle. To protect the Ark from being stolen by either nation, King Josiah—a man ahead of his time—ordered the Levites to put the Ark in a secret, secluded hiding place underneath what is now the Dome of the Rock.

Second Chronicles 35:3 is the last mention of the Ark of the Covenant in the historical books. Jeremiah 3:16 refers to it saying that, when the Messiah comes, no one will mention the Ark anymore. The Ark is a type or picture of the promised Messiah. When the real thing arrives, the type is unnecessary. The final passage referring to the Ark is Revelation 11:19, which mentions the original Temple in heaven as having its own, original Ark of the Testimony.

The Ark of the Covenant has never left Jerusalem. I believe it now sits in a safe, secret, secluded hiding place prepared by God through King Solomon to protect it for when it will be needed in the last days in the next Temple—the Third Temple, the Tribulation Temple—that will be built shortly after the Rapture of the church. But it won’t be needed for the Messiah’s Temple—the one Jesus Christ Himself will build after the Tribulation, and the one from which He will rule and reign for 1,000 years in the Kingdom to come.

The text does not refer to placing the Ark in the Temple; it had been in the Temple’s Holy of Holies for many years (1 Ki. 8; 2 Chr. 5). Rather, Josiah recognized the threat posed by the Babylonians and Egyptians. These two empires were battling each other at the time, and Israel was caught in the middle. To protect the Ark from being stolen by either nation, King Josiah—a man ahead of his time—ordered the Levites to put the Ark in a secret, secluded hiding place underneath what is now the Dome of the Rock.

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by Jimmy DeYoung

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Tuesday, July 24
Guest speaker, Brooke Goldstein, followed by a concert featuring Israeli music from G'Sharim.

Attorney Brooke Goldstein, director of the Lawfare Project, is a dynamic speaker whose vital message has a twofold emphasis: (1) exposing Palestinian abuse of women and children, and (2) disclosing radical Islam's efforts to use our legal system as a weapon against Christians and Jews.

For more details please call The Friends of Israel, Monday through Friday between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM (Eastern time), at 800-257-7843 and ask for Lisa Grosso at extension 139. Or visit our website, www.foi.org.
A Letter From Jerusalem: Survival Strategies for Ordinary Living

When your hometown also happens to be a spiritual and political powder keg—a point of pilgrimage, as well as strife—it’s easy to find yourself struggling to maintain some emotional equilibrium. Don’t get me wrong, it’s a privilege to live in Zion. Jerusalem is a beautiful city on innumerable levels.

And yet, sometimes, ordinary life can get intense. Besides being at the epicenter of the Arab-Israeli conflict, we Jerusalemites also get worn down by the intracommunal tensions between traditional and nonobservant Jews on the one hand, and the ultra-Orthodox on the other.

And, as in any major city, prosaic worries also dominate day-to-day life: high taxes, choking traffic, dirty streets, deficient schools, and a dearth of...
public spaces—making it seem the veneer of civilization is running thin.

So my wife, Lisa, and I have come up with five strategies that help us maintain our perspective:

**Shopping.** We found a great place to do our grocery shopping. For visitors I recommend the Mahane Yehuda outdoor market downtown. I like it for its bustling and zesty ambiance, fresh produce, and low prices. Fishmongers and spice merchants compete with boutique fashion and ceramic shops, mom-and-pop Ethiopian eateries, gourmet cheese and wine shops, and even a London-style fish-and-chips shop.

When we need to do a “big shop” to stock up on household staples like cleaning supplies, paper towels, and tuna fish, we skip our favorite supermarket (too expensive) and Mahane Yehuda (inconvenient because of parking and congestion) and head to one of several big hurly-burly discount supermarkets in the industrial part of our southern Jerusalem neighborhood, usually Rami Levy discount supermarket.

Thursday nights, when what passes for the Israeli weekend begins, the big supermarkets tend to be jumping with pre-Sabbath shoppers. Fortunately, for ordinary grocery shopping, we discovered a small retrograde supermarket that caters to Israelis from English-speaking countries (called “Anglos” here), diplomats, and UN personnel. It is called Super Deal (28 Hebron Road, near the Old Train Station).

It’s not particularly fancy or nicely lit, and it doesn’t offer the variety of the bigger supermarkets. The bargains are few; and the prices, well let’s just say they’re not cheap. Still, Super Deal stocks many Anglo favorites not widely available in the country, like Aunt Jemima pancake mix, ground coffee, and Gatorade for the Americans; and Marmite, English tea, and shortbread biscuits for the Brits. (Did I mention that Lisa is London born?) If you spend more than 300 shekels (about $80) you get a free bottle of soda pop.

Last Thanksgiving it seemed as if Super Deal’s kosher butcher shop (which is professionally staffed by Palestinian-Arab butchers) supplied the entire expat community in Jerusalem with turkeys.

Thank goodness for Super Deal.

**Shabbat.** Israelis lead hectic lives. Since Friday is a school day and Sunday is the start of the new work week, Saturday is our only day to unwind. Those of us who are traditional and sanctify the Sabbath don’t work, travel, or even cook from Friday night at sunset until after dark Saturday. Saturday is a real “day of rest,” as the Sabbath is called.

Lisa and I often wonder how our fellow Israelis who don’t observe Shabbat stay sane. At our place, off go the Blackberries, Internet, and television—and unless some kind of crisis is afoot, we don’t take telephone calls or listen to the radio news. Instead, we spend quality time with family and friends.

On Friday night we try to get to synagogue services. We recently discovered a new congregation called *Mizmor Le’David* (Song of David) that welcomes the Sabbath with song and joyful prayer. After services we either host or are invited for a traditional Shabbat meal. The meal always begins with a song welcoming the Sabbath and the benediction over the wine. Sitting around the Shabbat table, whether on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon or both, gives us an opportunity to enjoy camaraderie with friends. It’s a way of putting life on hold. We always sing the grace after meals before leaving the table for conversation in the living room.

Thank goodness for Shabbat.

**Walking.** On Saturday mornings there is relatively little traffic in Jerusalem. Most businesses, restaurants, and shops are closed, as are schools. The city recently created a new urban trail along the old railroad track (this historic line once connected Beirut, Lebanon, to Cairo, Egypt). Nowadays it’s a bike path and pedestrian mall, making it a lovely place for a Shabbat walk.

Alternatively, we stroll along the Sherover-Haas Promenade, which offers panoramic views of Jerusalem, the Old City, and the Mount of Olives from the south. We never tire of this landscape. For weekday sanity, I usually hike up to Kibbutz Ramat Rachel, which sits astride Israel’s 1949 armistice lines (what people confusingly call the 1967 boundaries). From the lookout point you can see the outskirts of Bethlehem (now controlled by the Palestinian Authority). When the weather is good, I bicycle up to the kibbutz and take a quick swim in the pool.

Thank goodness that Jerusalem, though hilly, is a walking city.

**Eating.** Anyone who knows me knows I enjoy a good meal, and Jerusalem is blessed with excellent restaurants. Since we adhere to Jewish
dietary traditions, the restaurants we frequent are kosher, serving either meat or dairy but not both.

I'm partial to a simple mom-and-pop place called Ima (Mom's) at 189 Agrippas Street, not far from the Central Bus Station and the Mahane Yehuda market. Mom's specializes in Israeli-Oriental-Kurdish-style home cooking. Nothing fancy, but I always feel revived after the Kubbeh soup of small pockets made of semolina dough stuffed with ground beef and pine nuts. Lisa and I would eat there several times a week after I finished my shift at The Jerusalem Post. During the dark days of the Second Intifada (September 2000 to around 2004), we were sometimes the only ones in the place. Now it's best to make a reservation.

Our favorite special-occasion restaurant is Angelica at 7 Shatz Street in the center of town. I’ve seen famous authors and politicians eat there. The food is usually very good. For dairy, we go to a small hole in the wall called Al Dente at 50 Ussishkin Street. The pasta is freshly made, the food almost always delicious. A few months back when the renovated Israel Museum (11 Ruppin Boulevard) reopened, we discovered the fancy European-style meat restaurant called Modern (overlooking the Valley of the Cross). We like going there on a Tuesday night when the museum is open late.

Thank goodness for good food.

Culture. As you may have guessed, we love the Israel Museum. For occasional visitors, there is a long list of must-sees, such as the Shrine of the Book that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls and the enthralling 1:50 scale model of Jerusalem during the second Temple period.

I also never tire of experiencing the lovingly reconstructed synagogues in the museum, including the 18th-century sanctuary from Suriname (white sand floor); one from the 16th century called Kadavumbagam (“by the side of the landing place”) Synagogue from Cochin, India; and a 1735 synagogue from the market town of Horb in Southern Germany. I’m fond of the museum at night when you can see the nearby Knesset lit up.

We’ve finally gotten into the habit of going to the Cinematheque—the most civilized place in Jerusalem to see a film, not counting the Jerusalem Theater and Performing Arts Center near the Prime Minister’s Residence. The Cinematheque, situated near the Old City walls, is trendier. It’s a mecca for Jerusalem’s secular population and tends to offer a heavy fare of left-wing European films. Though it’s a bit too artsy for me, I’m not ashamed to confess that we’ve enjoyed live, high-definition simulcasts of some great Metropolitan Opera performances from New York.

Of course, there is a variety of lectures and classes in Jerusalem on any given evening. For instance, on Thursday evening the Menachem Begin Heritage Center offers a popular free lecture on the weekly Bible reading (in Hebrew) that has people lining up 20 minutes before the doors open. During the winter of 2012, Pardes, the Jewish creative learning institute, presented a series of lectures by the brilliant Bible scholar James L. Kugel.

When Lisa and I go abroad, we like to get a sense of what life is like for regular folks. What’s a grocery store like? How do people spend their free time? Where is a nice place to stroll? What cultural attractions appeal to locals? Where do locals eat?

If you feel the same way when you travel, make time to experience some of Jerusalem’s local flavor on your next visit. Ride our new light-rail train, stroll inside the new Hamashbir department store at Zion Square, visit a supermarket (it doesn’t have to be ours). A journey to Jerusalem should leave you fascinated and uplifted. Living here is exciting, though also a challenge. Jerusalem is a living, breathing city—just as it was in the days of the Bible.

Elliot Jager, a native New Yorker, has lived in Israel for 15 years. He is contributing editor to Jewish Ideas Daily, a staffer at the Tikvah Fund, and a former senior editor at The Jerusalem Post. You can reach him at elliot_jager@yahoo.com.
As the Palestinian-Arabs and their friends continue to push for “Palestinian” statehood, the wrong questions are being asked while the pertinent questions every reporter, activist, and foreign minister should be asking never arise.

Why do “Palestinians” need a state of their own? Who are these “stateless” people? What is their history? Where have they been for all of these years?

In the spirit of “you don’t know what you don’t know,” here are some Hansel-and-Gretel-like bread crumbs to guide journalists and others to the questions they might ask:

Where does the name Palestine come from, and who have been the people who have lived there? Of course, it was coined from the word Philistine by the conquering Romans to add insult to injury to a Jewish nation they sought to obliterate. The Romans conquered the land, but there was always a remnant of Jewish people living there.

While throughout the ages the land was under control of various powers, none called themselves “Palestinian”; and there was never a nation with that name. It was that Jewish remnant and those Jews who joined that remnant over time who became the “Palestinians.”

In modern times, the Ottoman Turks controlled this territory and, following World War I, the British (under the auspices of the League of Nations). In this period, there were many “Palestinian” institutions, though all of them were Jewish in character and membership. The most famous of these was, perhaps, The Palestine Post, which lives on today as The Jerusalem Post. There were Palestine orchestras and chess teams and the like.

But the names of the players were Jewish, not Arab. As Jewish nationalism in the region gained strength, the Arabs and Muslims committed massacre after massacre of Jewish people throughout Palestine. Meanwhile, in 1922, the British took 78 percent of territory that was promised for a Jewish homeland by the World War I victors and the League of Nations and gave it to the Arabs. The outcome was the heretofore nonexistent Arab nation of Transjordan.

Transjordan later became simply Jordan. This should be the end of the story, as the land of Palestine was divided (though quite unfairly) and an Arab state was created out of the Jewish homeland. “Two states for two peoples.”

Being handed 78 percent of a territory would satisfy most people—if their true interest were a state of their own. Instead, over the past seven decades, what the world refuses to see is the Arabs’ desire to obliterate Jewish nationalism and, later, the Jewish nation that was its culmination. Arab violence and terrorism against Jews continued; and as the Arabs stepped up their pressure on the British and the League of Nations in an attempt to appease the Arabs, the remaining 22 percent of the land left for the Jews was divided further. The Arabs again got the bigger portion.

The Jewish people accepted the offer and, when the mandate expired, declared independence.

continued on page 26
Is it possible that current world events are setting the stage for what will happen before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Earth? Only God knows the answer. But the Bible foretells significant things concerning nations that are in the news today.

**A Significant World Leader**

Daniel 7:7-27 reveals that, before Christ’s Second Coming, a revived Roman Empire will be established as a 10-division federation ruled cooperatively by 10 kings. Eventually, an 11th king will rise from within it, overthrow three original kings, become the dominant ruler, and blaspheme God.
Daniel 11:36–39 reveals this blasphemous, strong-willed ruler will oppose all established forms of worship, will want to be exclusively worshiped as God, and will be a man of war (2 Th. 2:3–4). He is called the “Antichrist” in 1 John 2:18; 4:3.

**Future Wars Against Israel**

Daniel 11:40 states, “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships.”

What is meant by “the time of the end”? The Bible divides history into two ages: the age before the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah to Earth to rule the world (Mt. 13:39–43) and the age when the Messiah is on Earth ruling the world. The first could be called “this present age.” Hebrews 6:5 calls the second “the age to come.”

It appears that, when Daniel 11:40 speaks of “the time of the end,” it refers to the end segment of this present age before Christ returns. More specifically, it refers to the last seven years of this present age. Today those years are frequently called the Tribulation.

Who are the kings of the South and North in verse 40? Verses 1–35 of Daniel 11 were fulfilled before Christ’s birth. They indicated the king of the South was the ruler of Egypt (south of Israel), and the king of the North was the ruler of Syria (north of Israel). Verse 40 has not yet been fulfilled. Since Daniel was not told the kings of the South and North in verse 40 differ from those in verses 1–35, we can conclude verse 40 refers to the rulers of Egypt and Syria during the last seven years of this present age.

Who is the “him” of verse 40 whom Egypt and Syria will attack during the last seven years before Christ’s Second Coming to Earth? Since the Antichrist is described immediately before verse 40, it is obvious he is the one whom Egypt and Syria attack.

How will they attack him? They are located in the Middle East, but the end of verse 40 indicates the Antichrist is not there then. Daniel 9:24–27 records a program God has designed exclusively for the people of Israel and Jerusalem. The original language of verses 26–27 reveals that, at the beginning of the last seven years of this unique program, the Antichrist will establish a strong, binding, seven-year covenant with Israel. In fact, it will so strongly bind Israel to him and his revived Roman Empire that he will regard Israel as an extension of himself and his empire in the Middle East. Therefore, any attack against Israel will be an attack against him and his empire.

How will the Antichrist react when Israel has been jointly attacked by Egypt and Syria? Daniel 11:40 says, “He shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.” He apparently will attack Syria, north of Israel, first. Then he will move his forces south through Israel, “the Glorious Land,” but won’t take time to cross the Jordan River to conquer Edom, Moab, and Ammon (modern Jordan, v. 41) because he will want to get to Egypt.

The Antichrist will conquer all of Egypt to its western border with Libya and its southern border with Sudan. (The “Ethiopia” of Daniel’s day was not the same nation as modern Ethiopia, vv. 42–43.) It appears he will get complete control of that part of the Middle East.

While the Antichrist plunders Egypt’s wealth, he will receive disturbing news from the east and north (v. 44) of another attack against his ally Israel: the multinational attack foretold in Ezekiel 38. The Jewish prophets Ezekiel and Daniel lived at the same time. The names of those nations in Ezekiel’s time were “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya,” and the tribes of Gomer and Togarmah (vv. 5–6).

Today they are Iran, Sudan, Libya, and Turkey. Gomer and Togarmah were two tribes located in what today is Turkey. These nations will be led by “Gog, of the land of Magog” (v. 2). Gog will come from his “place out of the far north” (v. 15), meaning Russia.

This attack will take place “in the latter days” (v. 16) and “latter years” of this present age before the Messiah comes to rule the world and after the Jewish people have been “gathered from many people” and been “brought out of the nations” (v. 8) and back to their homeland. This gathering has been taking place, particularly since 1948. The attack will take place after the Jewish people have made wasteland productive and feel so safe they have let down their own defenses (v. 11).

Clearly, this is not Israel’s attitude today. But Israel will feel safe during the first half of the last seven years before Christ’s return as a result of the Antichrist’s seven-year covenant to protect it. However, in the middle of that seven-year period, he will turn against Israel and desolate it until Christ’s return (Dan. 9:27).

The disturbing news the Antichrist will hear in Egypt will come from the east and north. Iran will come against Israel from the east. Russia and Turkey will come from the north. Sudan and Libya would normally come against Israel from the south and southwest. But it appears they will be unwilling to go through Egypt while the Antichrist and his armies are there. So they will take ships north through the Mediterranean Sea to join forces with Turkey and Russia coming from the north.

Once the Antichrist receives the news of this attack, “he shall go out with great fury” with the goal “to destroy and annihilate many” (11:44). But before he arrives, God will have destroyed the invading forces (Ezek. 38:18–23). Now the Antichrist will have a free hand in the Middle East. Perhaps he will claim credit for the supernatural destruction of these forces.

He will come to Jerusalem in the middle of the seven-year period, take his seat in Israel’s new Temple, claim to be God, and desolate Israel for three and one-half years (Dan. 9:27; 11:45; Mt. 24:15–21; 2 Th. 2:3–4) until Messiah Jesus returns to rescue Israel and destroy him.
The Arab Revolts and Israel

Tunisian protesters demonstrate in 2011 beneath a poster of Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old who died after setting himself on fire when police confiscated the fruit and vegetables he was selling without a permit (Salah Habibi/AP/Corbis).
When Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted from power in January 2011, no one in Israel or anywhere else could have forecast the major revolution that was beginning to unfold in the turbulent Arab world. Some Israeli Middle East analysts noted at the time that the domestic conditions that sparked the upheaval in Tunisia—widespread government corruption, rising food costs, high unemployment, and a lack of freedom of speech—prevailed in most other Arab countries as well. Today, however, the situation that once seemed of great interest has become one that directly impacts the Jewish state’s security.

The political revolt in the small North African country snuggled between Libya and Algeria along the Mediterranean coast began in a most unlikely manner. A 26-year-old street vendor in Tunis named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire on December 17, 2010, perishing several weeks later. He had informed friends beforehand about his planned immolation, saying he would take the drastic action to protest the municipal officials’ confiscation of his street wares, which he claimed they did in a harassing and humiliating manner.

The young Muslim quickly became a new shahid, or “martyr,” in the eyes of Arabs throughout the region, especially young people. His dramatic death sparked off anti-regime protests all over Tunisia. The street demonstrations were extensively covered by Gulf-based satellite news networks viewed by millions of Arabs in every part of the Middle East.

After President Ben Ali fled his country following 23 years in power to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia, the holiest Muslim country on Earth, a new government was formed. Its leaders promised to enact political and economic reforms. Recognizing that Arabs everywhere deeply admired the vendor’s drastic action, government officials later released a stamp with his picture on it. Songs about Bouazizi sprang up all over the region, hailing his willingness to commit suicide, rather than live any longer under the thumb of a repressive dictatorship.

By early February 2011, similar anti-government demonstrations were breaking out in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen. Later they spread to Libya, Morocco, Iraq, Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Mauritania. The burgeoning protest movement was quickly dubbed the Arab Spring by the international media, which rushed correspondents to many of the affected countries to cover the spreading upheaval.

The name came from earlier revolutions like the Prague Spring, which began in January 1968 with the election of reformer Alexander Dubček as the head of the Czech Communist party. However, that popular revolution was crushed the same year by military forces from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Block countries. In the Arab world itself, the protest movement quickly gained the moniker Arab Awakening, although Iranian Shiite Muslim leaders later termed it an Islamic revolution.

The most dramatic development of this early period was the fall from power of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011. Journalists covering the story noted that Facebook and other social networks were widely employed in rallying anti-government demonstrators, especially younger ones, to take to the streets. The massive rallies in Cairo and elsewhere caused the embattled Egyptian president—in power for nearly 30 years—to order his security forces to suppress the demonstrations with violence. Hundreds of protestors were slaughtered, and many others were incarcerated.

Mubarak knew his days in office were numbered when the leaders of his closest ally, the United States, called on him to halt the brutal suppression and told him he needed to step down.

Impact on Israel

With Mubarak’s downfall, the mushrooming Arab revolts mutated from being of great interest to the Israeli government and people to a story that directly touched the Jewish state’s vital security interests.

After all, Israel’s 1978 peace treaty with Egypt—the Arab world’s largest and most influential country—has been the cornerstone of its foreign and military policy for three decades. The prospect that “democratic reforms” in Egypt might lead to the eventual abrogation of the U.S.-brokered Camp David treaty was immediately and heavily discussed in the wake of Mubarak’s stunning ouster.

Israeli officials and the general public were initially reassured when it became clear Egypt’s American-trained and funded military, now under the authority of Vice President Omar Suleiman, remained in overall control of Egypt—a country where the birth rate is incredibly high, poverty rife, and jobs scarce.

Still, the announcement that Mubarak would be placed on trial on charges of premeditated murder of peaceful street protestors sent shivers up many Israeli spines. If such a previously unthinkable thing could happen to Israel’s closest (and nearly only) Arab ally, what else was possible in the explosive region?

Despite their concerns, most Israeli leaders publicly welcomed the intervention of NATO forces in the Libyan civil war, designed to help remove the dictator Muammar Gaddafi and his family regime from power. Known for his occasional anti-Israel tirades and support for Palestinian terrorist groups, Gaddafi’s violent death in October 2011 after 42 years in office brought relief to many in Israel.

However, officials expressed growing anxiety as evidence mounted that Libyan weapons, including rockets, were being smuggled across northern Egypt to the Hamas-ruled Gaza
The Questions No One Asks
from page 21

as the nation of Israel. The Arabs declared war. Though they were unable to defeat the Israelis, the Arabs did gain more territory. The Jordanians expanded into what they renamed “the West Bank” so as to erase the Jewish connection to Judea and Samaria (as those areas were called for millennia), while Egypt grabbed the Gaza Strip.

The Arabs who lived in those areas never cried out for independence or claimed to be oppressed; nor did they threaten to go to the United Nations. Why? Because they were part of, rather than distinct from, the Arab Nation. Instead, there were incessant terror attacks. In 1964, the Arabs formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—three years before Israel would gain control over the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria (aka “the West Bank”).

So, what were the Arabs bent on liberating, and from whom were they liberating it? Did they demand a state from Egypt and Jordan? This is the same PLO that today controls the Palestinian Authority and has never renounced its appetite for all of what was once dubbed Palestine.

It was only after Israel’s miraculous victory in 1967 that “the West Bank” and Gaza Strip suddenly had relevance to their Arab inhabitants, and it was then that the Arab propaganda machine revved up. It eventually inverted much of the world’s perception of the Middle East, transforming tiny Israel from its natural role of “David” against the massive Arab population and lands to one of “Goliath” against the “stateless,” “oppressed,” and “occupied” “Palestinians.”

It made the notion of changing straw into gold seem like child’s play. And it worked. That the Palestinian Arabs have spilled much innocent blood to get their “cause” out there—murdered Olympic athletes, airline passengers, bus riders, diners—seems to have faded from memory. But these headline-grabbing crimes got them to the head of the line. The lesson: crime pays. Terror works.

So journalists, activists, and foreign ministers of the world: You still have time to ask yourselves and others these questions, still have time to prevent a great wrong from being done, still have time to save untold lives, still have time to avoid a terrible precedent, still have time to prevent the creation of another terrorist state.

Will you?

Steve Feldman is executive director of the Greater Philadelphia District of the Zionist Organization of America and was a reporter for more than 20 years. This article first ran in www.americanthinker.com. Our thanks to Mr. Feldman for his permission to use it.

David Dolan is a Christian author and journalist who has lived in Israel 30 years. He can be reached through his website, www.ddolan.com.
This year the Israeli Supreme Court upheld a law that prohibits Palestinians who marry Israelis from gaining automatic citizenship. Although it was a controversial decision in some circles, Israel has good reason to fear this uncontrolled immigration.

Between 1967 and 1993, just a few hundred Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza won the right to live in Israel by marrying Israeli Arabs (who constitute nearly one-fifth of Israel’s population) and acquiring Israeli citizenship. Then the Oslo accords offered a little-noted family-reunification provision that turned this trickle into a river: 137,000 residents of the Palestinian Authority (PA) moved to Israel between 1994 and 2002, some of them engaged in either sham or polygamous marriages.

This uncontrolled immigration presents a security danger. Yuval Diskin, head of the Shin Bet security service, noted in 2005 that of 225 Israeli Arabs involved in terror against Israel, 25 of them, or 11 percent, had legally entered Israel through the family unification provision. They went on to kill 19 Israelis and wound 83; most notoriously, Shadi Tubasi suicide-bombed Haifa’s Matza Restaurant in 2002 on behalf of Hamas, killing 15.

It also serves as a stealth form of Palestinian “right of return,” thereby undermining the Jewish nature of Israel. Those 137,000 new citizens constitute about 2 percent of Israel’s population, not a small number. Yuval Steinitz, now the finance minister, in 2003 discerned in PA encouragement for family reunification “a deliberate strategy” to increase the number of Palestinians in Israel and undermine its Jewish character. Ahmed Qurei, a top Palestinian negotiator, later confirmed this fear: “If Israel continues to reject our propositions regarding the borders [of a Palestinian state], we might demand Israeli citizenship.”

In response to these two dangers, Israel’s parliament in July 2003 passed the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law. The law bans Palestinian family members from automatically gaining Israeli residency or citizenship, with temporary and limited exemptions requiring the interior minister to certify that they “identify with Israel” or are otherwise helpful. In the face of severe criticism, then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon affirmed in 2005, “The State of Israel has every right to maintain and protect its Jewish character, even if that means that this would impact on its citizenship policy.”

Only 33 of 3,000 applications for exemptions, according to Sawsan Zaher, an attorney who challenged the law, have been approved. Israel is hardly alone in adopting stringent requirements for family reunification: Denmark, for example, has had such rules in place for a decade, excluding (among others) an Israeli husband from the country, with the Netherlands and Austria following suit.

In January, Israel’s Supreme Court, by a 6-5 vote, upheld this landmark law, making it permanent. While recognizing the rights of a person to marry, the court denied that marriage implies a right of residency. Justice Asher Dan Grunis wrote in the majority opinion, “Human rights are not a prescription for national suicide.”

This pattern of Palestinian emigration toward Jews goes back almost to 1882, when European Jews began their aliya (Hebrew for “ascent,” meaning immigration to the land of Israel). In 1939, for example, Winston Churchill noted how Jewish immigration to Palestine had stimulated Arab immigration: “So far from being persecuted, the Arabs have crowded into the country and multiplied till their population has increased.”

In brief, you didn’t have to be Jewish to benefit from the Zionists’ high standard of living and law-abiding society. One student of this subject, Joan Peters, estimates that a dual Jewish and Arab immigration “of at least equal proportions” took place between 1893 and 1948. Nothing surprising here: Other modern Europeans who settled in underpopulated areas (such as Australia or Africa) also created societies that attracted indigenous peoples.

This pattern of Palestinian aliya has continued since Israel’s birth. Anti-Zionist they may be, but economic migrants, political dissidents, homosexuals, informants, and just ordinary folk vote with their feet, preferring the Middle East’s outstandingly modern and liberal state to the PA’s or Hamas’ hell holes. And note how few Israeli Arabs move to the West Bank or Gaza to live with a spouse, though no legal obstacles prevent them from doing so.

The Supreme Court’s decision has momentous long-term implications. As Eli Hazan writes in Israel Hayom, “The court ruled de jure but also de facto that the state of Israel is a Jewish state, and thus settled a years-long debate.” The closing of the back-door “right of return” secures Israel’s Zionist identity and future.

by Daniel Pipes, president of the Middle East Forum and Taube distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. Copyright 2012 by Daniel Pipes. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Read more from Mr. Pipes at www.DanielPipes.org.
Creation is God’s handiwork. It is the starting point for a correct understanding of everything about humankind, history, and life. So we begin this series with creation, the first of seven keys to understanding world history.

Three Main Views

There are three main views concerning the world’s origin. The first is evolution, which is heavily emphasized and widely taught. The second is theistic evolution, a view held by people who attempt to reconcile the Bible with evolution. And the third is creation, which follows the Bible. Not all evolutionists are alike; not all theistic evolutionists are alike; and not all creationists are alike. These are broad categories.

Evolution. Evolution has three basic tenets: (1) The universe started with a big bang, (2) life began completely by chance, and (3) organisms developed over time. The Big Bang theory claims that sometime in the distant past, an uncaused explosion created matter. Then, by chance, the first and simplest-celled protozoan somehow came into existence; and, over time, life as we know it evolved.

A formula would be Mutations + Natural Selection x Time = Evolution. Mutations would be changes occurring...
along the way. Natural selection claims the best changes were preserved; and, over time, they evolved one from another. That’s evolution in a nutshell.

Of course, there are many scientific problems with the evolutionary theory. (A wonderful source of information is Answers in Genesis, www.answersingenesis.org.) One problem is that mutations are extremely rare and usually detrimental. Nor do mutations explain the creation of new genes. For a protozoan to develop an eye, for example, it must acquire new DNA.

Second, inferior mutations often survive. In the laboratory, scientists often enable the improvements to survive. But with evolution, the selection must be natural, or it is not evolution.

Third, the time required for evolution is not credible. The following is from Dr. Charles C. Ryrie’s Basic Theology, a book I highly recommend:

While probability is expressed by a fraction (e.g., one in five million times), and when the fraction is as small as these are for the chance production of a protein molecule, then the mathematician would declare the probability of its happening as zero. The evolutionist would likely point out that there still exists a chance, however infinitesimal, of evolution happening because of the billions of years involved. However, even billions of years will not reduce the probability enough to put it in the range of reasonable probability. Davidheiser [Scientist Dr. Bolton Davidheiser, 1912–2007] tested the well-known statement that if a million monkeys were permitted to strike the keys of a million typewriters for a million years, they might by chance type a copy of a Shakespearean play. Setting up a controlled experiment with only capital letters, continuous typing at a uniform rate of speed, and requiring only the first verse of Genesis, he shows that a million monkeys could not type Genesis 1:1, let alone a Shakespearean play in billions of years. Even to type the first line of Hamlet (“To: Who’s there?”), would require on the average of a number of repeated experiments 284 trillion years, a period considerably longer than it took evolution to do all it supposedly did.

The obvious conclusion of this is simply that it requires an incredible amount of faith to believe that evolution could have caused by chance all life that ever did or does now exist.

Could life have evolved by chance? The probability of forming one protein molecule by chance is one in $10^{243}$, which is a figure of 1 followed by 243 zeros. That figure merely expresses the probability of a single protein molecule being created accidentally. Our bodies contain millions of cells. A mathematician would say there is no reasonable probability.

A fourth problem is the second law of thermodynamics, called the Law of Entropy. Though matter is neither created nor destroyed, every transfer involves a loss of energy. Thus the universe is declining, not increasing. It requires more faith to believe evolution is the source of complex creatures, laws of gravity, and all other laws of the universe than it does to believe in God.

**Theistic Evolution.** Dr. Ryrie provides a succinct definition: Theistic evolution holds that God directed, used, and controlled the processes of naturalistic evolution to “create” the world and all that is in it. Usually this view includes the idea that the days of Genesis 1 were ages, that the evolutionary processes were involved in the “creation” of Adam, and that the earth and prehuman forms are of great antiquity.

Creationists who want to embrace evolution reject natural selection in favor of supernatural selection. Thus theistic evolution tries to ride two horses going in opposite directions. All true evolutionists reject theistic evolution, as do all true creationists. It is an unsatisfactory attempt to bring two divergent views together.

**Creation.** Regardless of their differences on other matters, most creationists hold the following principles:

- The Bible is the sole authority, and the book of Genesis teaches about creation.
- God created everything from nothing, *ex nihilo*. He did not take something that already existed (there is no eternal matter) and form something else from it, as you and I do. God created from nothing. In the beginning, there was only God. He exists in a spiritual, supernatural realm; and He created the natural realm. He created the elements, the universe, and so forth—all from nothing.
- Adam was the first man. There were no prior stages of man. Adam was created in God’s image, as a person able to think, feel, and determine.
- The universe is much younger than evolutionists claim. Some Bibles place Genesis 1:1 at 4004 B.C. because Bishop James Ussher (1581–1656) meticulously studied Scripture and computed the dates. He concluded Genesis 1:1 occurred at 4004 B.C.

We may not be able to be so conclusive. However, the Bible indicates a young Earth, perhaps 6,000 years old, based on God’s human calendar in Genesis 5 and 11. Because something appears old doesn’t necessarily make it so. God created Adam and Eve fully mature and able to cohabit. The trees and animals He made were also mature. So it stands to reason the universe was created mature.

You cannot be an evolutionist and uphold Scripture. Nor can you be a theistic evolutionist and be consistent with God’s Word.

**Laws of Creation**

There are laws of creation:

1. **God created everything that exists.**
2. **“To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing” (Isa. 40:25–26; cf. 45:11–18). “For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11).**
(2) **God owns everything.** “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness” (50:10, 12).

(3) **God created in six days.** All biblical evidence argues for six 24-hour days. (See Exodus 20:11; 31:17.)

(4) **God created by speaking.** John 1 confirms this fact. Jesus is the Word who was with God and the Word who made everything. All three members of the Godhead were involved in creation, according to Scripture.

(5) **God has given man dominion over the earth.** Man has authority and responsibility over the world.

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**BIBLICAL CREATION, DAY BY DAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DAY ONE</strong></th>
<th>“God said, ’Let there be light’” (Gen. 1:3). That light was not the sun, moon, or stars. God, who is light, gave light from Himself to His creation.</th>
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<td><strong>DAY TWO</strong></td>
<td>“God said, ’Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters’” (v. 6). God infused the water with light, then separated it and put water above and water below, creating the heavens.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY THREE</strong></td>
<td>“God said, . . . ’Let the dry land appear’” (v. 9). On dry land He created trees, plants, flowers, and vegetables.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY FOUR</strong></td>
<td>“God said, ’Let there be lights’” (v. 14). He created the sun, moon, and stars and spread the stars out into the universe. Job 38 describes the angels watching the process.</td>
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<td><strong>DAY FIVE</strong></td>
<td>God created the fish of the seas and the birds of the air (Gen. 1:20).</td>
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<td><strong>DAY SIX</strong></td>
<td>God created the animals and, ultimately, man as the crowning aspect of His creation (vv. 24–26). In man He infused a God-likeness that characterizes who and what we are. Then He gave man dominion over everything (v. 28), telling Adam to rule over the earth and subdue it (vv. 29–30).</td>
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<td><strong>DAY SEVEN</strong></td>
<td>God rested (2:2).</td>
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The Fallout of Unbelief

If you refuse to accept Genesis 1, you undermine the authority of the entire Book. You must be a creationist, or you might as well throw away the Bible. Some people have done exactly that. They have rejected the authoritative nature of God’s statements about creation in the Bible. Doing so, however, undermines the authority of “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). Destroying authority for one part of God’s Word raises questions about the authority of the rest of it.

Furthermore, if you reject Genesis 1, you reject the very reliability of God Himself. Over and over, in dozens of passages, God said He made everything. If evolution were true, then God would be a liar.

We all need some type of compass for life, or we’re lost. God’s infallible Word is that compass. Without it, you have no foundational truth. You and I were created by God and have a responsibility to Him, and one day every one of God’s created beings will answer to Him—even those who claim they are the product of evolution.

The world did not merely happen. It was designed by God for a purpose. He is the source, support, and end of all things (Rom. 11:36), as well as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He created you and loves you; and if you understand creation, you possess the first key to understanding history.

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid., 196.
Amazing Archaeological Jewish Claim to Land

A 2,000-year-old, second-Temple-era clay seal the size of a coin and a 1,500-year-old stamp, discovered within weeks of each other, have thrilled the Israeli archaeological world and further prove Israel's historical Jewish claim to Jerusalem.

The cartouche—or seal—never before seen by the public, is the size of the modern New Israeli Shekel coin and bears the Aramaic inscriptions “it is pure” and a two-letter abbreviation for the name of God.

It was discovered near the Robinson's Arch at the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount. Archaeologists say the soil layer above the Herodian road where the seal was found dates to the first century B.C.

Two weeks after the seal was displayed to the public, archaeologists continued to dig up breathtaking proofs of the ancient and never-severed connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. They found a tiny 1,500-year-old stamp near the city of Akko, bearing the image of the seven-branched Temple menorah. The stamp was used to identify baked products and probably belonged to a bakery that supplied kosher bread to the Jewish people of Akko in the Byzantine period (sixth century).

The Seal

Archaeologist Eli Shukron of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Professor Ronny Reich of Haifa University, who oversaw the excavation of the seal, explained, “This is the first time an object of this kind has been found. It is direct archaeological evidence of Jewish activity on the Temple Mount during the second Temple era,” they said. “Products being brought to the Temple had to be stamped pure—which is what this seal was used for.”

Such seals are mentioned in the Mishnah and discussed in the Talmud, but the cartouche does not match any of the four inscriptions included in extant texts. “What we know is brought down from the surviving literature,” the archaeologists said. “Here archaeology has brought us something new.”

In addition to the seal, other artifacts were discovered dating to the second Temple period, and some to the days of the Hasmoneans—such as oil lamps, clay cooking pots, a jug containing oils and perfumes, and coins from such Hasmonean kings as Alexander Jannaeus and John Hyrcanus.

The Hasmoneans, descendants of the Maccabees of Hanukkah fame, ruled Judea from 140 B.C. to 116 B.C.

The Stamp

This find belongs to a group of stamps referred to as “bread stamps” because they were usually used to stamp baked goods.

According to Gilad Jaffe and Dr. Danny Syon, directors of the excavation on behalf of...
Discoveries Affirm

the Israel Antiquities Authority, “A number of stamps bearing an image of a menorah are known from different collections. The Temple menorah, being a Jewish symbol par excellence, indicates the stamps belonged to Jews, unlike Christian bread stamps with the cross pattern, which were much more common in the Byzantine period.”

There were no Muslims in the region at the time because the Qur’an had not yet been written.

According to Syon, This is the first time such a stamp is discovered in a controlled archaeological excavation, thus making it possible to determine its provenance and date of manufacture. The stamp is important because it proves that a Jewish community existed in the settlement of Uza in the Christian-Byzantine period. The presence of a Jewish settlement so close to Akko—a region that was definitely Christian at this time—constitutes an innovation in archaeological research.

The excavators added, “Due to the geographical proximity of Horbat Uza to Akko, we can speculate that the settlement supplied kosher baked goods to the Jews of Akko in the Byzantine period.”

The stamp is engraved with a seven-branched menorah atop a narrow base, and the top of the branches forms a horizontal line. A number of Greek letters are engraved around a circle and dot on the end of the handle. Dr. Leah Di Segni of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem suggested they probably spell out the name Launtius, which was common among Jews of the period and also appears on another Jewish bread stamp of unknown provenance. According to Dr. Syon and Gilad Jaffe, “This is probably the name of the baker from Horbat Uza.”

Horbat Uza is a small rural settlement where clues were previously found that allude to it being a Jewish settlement. These include a clay coffin, a Shabbat lamp, and jars with menorah patterns painted on them. Dr. David Amit of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who has made a study of bread stamps, added, “A potter engraved the menorah image in the surface of the stamp prior to firing it in a kiln, whereas the owner’s name was engraved in the stamp’s handle after firing. Hence we can assume that a series of stamps bearing the menorah symbol were produced for Jewish bakers, and each of these bakers carved his name on the handle, which also served as a stamp.

“In this way the dough could be stamped twice before baking: once with the menorah—the general symbol of the Jewish identity of Jewish bakeries—and again with the private name of the baker in each of these bakeries, which also guaranteed the bakery’s kashrut [fitness under Jewish dietary laws].”

by Arutz-7 (IsraelNationalNews.com)

Reich Explains the Clay Seal

Professor Ronny Reich of Haifa University, who oversaw excavation of a 2,000-year-old clay seal, spoke to the press, giving more details about the amazing discovery in Israel. To watch the interview online, log on to www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/151057. Here is what he said:

Just recently we found this seal impression on a small lump of clay, which dates back to Jerusalem of the late second Temple period. . . . It bears two words in Aramaic, which was used in those days by Jews: Duka LeYa, which means “pure for God.”

And this reminds [us] of the administration of the Temple Mount. You can read it in the Mishnah [a part of the Talmud] . . . how these hotamot, seal impressions, were used. A person who seeks to offer a drink offering, or an offering of any kind, went to the man in charge of the hotamot, gave him his money—actually purchased an offering—gave him the money and received such a hotam, which is used like a coupon today, and then went to another place in the Temple Mount administration, probably to the storerooms, and received against his hotam, the proper offering. And with this he went to the Temple itself, to the altar of sacrifice, and gave it to the kohenim [priests]; and they sacrificed the sacrifice.

And so then the Mishnah also describes what happens if somebody lost such a seal. And, of course, . . . the man is always responsible for the loss, never the Temple—and he had to pay it all, if it’s one of these officials, he had to pay it from his own pocket if there was any loss.

So we have for the first time an indication of the administration of the Temple Mount, right? And it fits perfectly with what the Mishnah tells us.

And I also mentioned another instance: It’s Hanukkah now, described in [the] Talmud . . . on the famous instance when, after they [the Maccabees] have consecrated, reestablished, the work in the Temple after they defeated the Greek [sic], that they found only one jug of oil, which was sealed with the seal of the kohen gadol, the high priest. This is not the seal—this [pointing to the seal] is not impressed by the high priest, but we can see that these commodities and offerings were kept, authenticated to be pure, not just there; and this is a nice instance of such a hotam that we found.
What does God say about Israel’s future? If the New Testament teaches ethnic Israel has a future, then Replacement Theology is untrue.

While on Earth, Jesus established that He was premillennial—meaning He believed in a literal, future, restored Kingdom of God. In Matthew 6:9–10, He taught His followers to pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Jesus instructed His followers to pray that God will bring or restore His Kingdom on Earth, and He described what Earth will be like when that occurs.

How is God’s will done in heaven? Precisely as He says. His will is absolute. If the church is the Kingdom of God, as Replacement theologians claim—or the Kingdom of God is here now—then what is done on Earth must mirror God’s will in heaven. That is an impossible stretch even for the most generous mind.

Jesus’ Throne

According to the New Testament, the nation of Israel and the Promised Land are vital to God establishing His restored Kingdom on Earth. The Bible teaches that Jesus fulfills the Davidic Covenant that guarantees a descendant of David will sit on David’s throne in Israel forever. The Hebrew Scriptures teach the Messiah will rule over Israel and the Gentile nations from His throne in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–12; Jer. 23:5–8; 33:14–16).

To date, these prophecies have not been fulfilled. But Jesus said, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28). Jesus spoke those words in response to the apostle Peter’s concern about the disciples’ future. Jesus told them that someday, they each will sit on a throne ruling the tribes of Israel. Jesus certainly saw a future for ethnic Israel.

But the verse reveals more. The title Son of Man refers to Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus said He will sit on the throne of His glory, a throne that will bring Him honor. Nowhere does Scripture say He sits on a throne in heaven. Rather, it teaches that He is seated at the right hand of the Father’s throne. The throne of Christ’s glory is earthly. It will be located in Jerusalem where He will rule over Israel and the world. Jesus did not ascend to that throne at His First Coming. Thus, if He is to be faithful to His words, He must yet sit on His throne in Jerusalem.

Jesus explained when that event will occur: in the “regeneration.” The Greek word translated “regeneration” is a compound made up of two Greek words: palin and genesia. Palin literally means “back again” or “back to a previous time.” Genesia is the word for genesis, “in the beginning.”

The Old Testament prophets taught the Messiah will restore God’s Kingdom to Earth and transform Earth to its pre-fall condition. No more disasters, disease, sickness, deformities, hard labor, thorns and thistles, pollution, wild nature in animals, injustice, or war. Thus Jesus said He will sit on His throne when Earth is restored to its condition as in the beginning—the restored Kingdom of God on Earth.

When the apostles saw Christ prior to His return to heaven, they asked, “Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Obviously, they fully believed Jesus will restore the Kingdom to Earth and that Israel will be central to the process. Jesus did not correct their belief that He will restore the Kingdom to Israel. He simply replied that it was not for them to know the timing of God’s plan to do so; their concern should be to get busy building His church.

Peter’s Eschatology

A mere two chapters later, Peter used the teaching of the restored Kingdom to preach salvation to the Jewish people from Solomon’s porch on the Temple Mount. The location would have ensured his listeners were Jewish. But he also addressed them in Acts 3:12–18 as those who denied Christ before Pilate and chose a murderer over Him. What Peter shared next revealed he, too, was premillennial.

Repet therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (vv. 19–21).

Peter laid out an eschatological order for Israel. The nation’s repentance will lead God to blot out its sins; Christ will return, and then the times of refreshing will come from God when He restores the Kingdom. Peter didn’t teach Replacement Theology. Rather, he taught that God has a unique program for Israel that is key to God restoring His Kingdom on Earth.

Paul also taught this truth: “Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!” (Rom. 11:1). It is obvious from the context of Romans 11:1–2 that Paul was asked if God had cast Israel away. His response was clear: Certainly not! In fact, he declared,
“And so all Israel will be saved” (v. 26). Then he quoted from Psalm 14 and Isaiah 59 that God will honor His covenant and remove the Jewish people’s sins.

In Romans 11:29, Paul reminded us, “The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Irrevocable means God will not cancel or retract His gifts or call. He Himself is the One who made the covenants with Israel. He is the One who told the people of Israel the covenants are everlasting. He is the One who remembers His covenants with Israel, and He is the One who keeps them.

Israel’s coming national reconciliation, Christ’s return, and the restoration of God’s Kingdom on Earth do not depend on anything the Jewish people have or have not done. They depend solely on God’s faithfulness to keep His irrevocable promises. According to Ezekiel 36, God will keep His promises for His name’s sake so that His name will be exalted above every name on Earth, under the earth, and in the heavens.

Conclusion

For Replacement Theology to be valid, God must teach it clearly in His Word. However, nowhere does the Bible teach God has rejected Israel or replaced it with the church. Nor does it say the church is the historic continuation of Old Testament Israel or that all of the covenant promises have been taken from Israel and given to the church.

What the New Testament does teach is that Israel has a grand future in God’s plan, although Israel’s role is distinct and different from God’s plan for the church. And without a future for Israel, there will be no glorious future Kingdom of God on Earth.

James A. Showers is the executive director for The Friends of Israel.

A lir.e Forghani, a strategy specialist and staunch supporter of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has published a detailed military plan to destroy Israel, which he said can be done in less than nine minutes with Iranian missiles that are impossible to intercept.

According to a report published by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) in February, Forghani’s article “claims that Tehran is capable of annihilating Israel within less than nine minutes using its arsenal of missiles and by deploying operational combat units throughout the world. The article specifies targets to be hit inside Israel, including nuclear facilities, air force bases, and civilian infrastructure, as well as providing detailed profiles of the various missiles Iran will use, including Shahab 3, Sejjil, Ashura, and Ghadr missiles.”

MEMRI also said, “Forghani claims that Iran must take advantage of the Islamic awakening sweeping the region, which he says has paved the way for Israel’s destruction; of the passivity he says characterizes the U.S. and the West; and of the presidency of [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad in order ‘to destroy Israel,’ and therefore sets the deadline as 2014, which he says will be the end of Ahmadinejad’s presidency.”

Publication of the report coincided with a speech Khamenei made calling Israel a “cancerous tumor” and “corrupting material” that Islam is religiously and legally obligated to annihilate.

The independent news company WND, formerly WorldNetDaily, said Forghani believes “it is the duty for all Muslims to participate in this defensive jihad” and kill their enemies because Muslims must never be dominated by infidels.

It also said, “Forghani details the Islamic duty of jihad as laid out in the Qur’an for the sake of Allah and states that ‘primary jihad’ . . . can only occur when the Hidden Imam, the Shiites’ 12th Imam Mahdi, returns. Shiites believe Mahdi’s return will usher in Armageddon.”
The Lord’s Chastening

The Lord calls those He addresses “sons” (Greek, huios), indicating He considers them true believers. They were adopted into His family through faith in Christ. The word chastening (Greek, paideia) is used in the context of parents lovingly disciplining their children through training and education. Paideia was never used to speak of punishment. It connotes instruction in what is good and right, such as instilling virtue and instituting proper correction to guard a child from doing evil. Scourge actually means to flog with a whip and is used figuratively for the Lord’s corrective discipline, comparing Him to a father who uses a switch to correct his child’s behavior.

Discipline confirms God’s love and proves the person being corrected truly belongs to Him. Even Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was made perfect through what He suffered (Heb. 2:10). So the Lord’s chastening is positive, not negative, to bring encouragement, not discouragement.

One should not “despise” (12:5) or look with aversion or contempt on the Lord’s chastening. Discipline does not happen by chance but is the perfect will of God the Father, out of necessity. Remember, God neverpunishes His children for their iniquities because all their punishment was borne by Jesus Christ on the cross (Rom. 8:11).

Receiving It

Chastening is to be received as correction from God:
If you endure chastening [discipline], God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons (Heb. 12:7–8).

Older English versions begin verse 7 with if; but a better translation of the Greek text is “for,” indicating God allows the persecution believers face for chastening purposes. Remember, chastening is not punishment but, rather, part of God’s training and education to curb and correct misdirection or evil in a believer’s life (cf. Dt. 8:5; 2 Sam. 7:14). We are to endure or remain under God’s discipline because, over time, it will bring us to spiritual maturity. God’s discipline is a sign to believers that they are God’s children. People who receive no discipline are illegitimate, that is, not true believers.

An illustration is how human fathers train their sons: Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:9–10).

If we respect and revere our fallible human fathers who chasten us, how much more should we respect our divine Father, who is infallible? He is the Father of our spiritual and physical lives. He not only has our eternal well-being in mind but all that is involved in our present existence. He knows exactly how much and what type of discipline we need and can handle (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13).

An earthly father only chastens “for a few days” (Heb. 12:10), until the child is grown. He metes out the discipline in a manner he deems correct and wise; but he may use the wrong method out of frustration or anger, discouraging the child who then turns away from him with bitterness and resentment.
However, our divine Father has perfect knowledge and always disciplines His children wisely, correctly, and profitably. His goal is to make them “partners of His holiness” (v. 10).

Discipline, whether from God or man, never “seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (v. 11). No matter how severe, discipline will produce peace and righteousness. Thus believers should regard the experience with joy, knowing it will strengthen their spiritual lives and deepen their relationships with God (cf. Jas. 1:2–4). Jesus clearly taught that all believers must be pruned and purified to have fruitful lives (Jn. 15:2).

**Responding to It**

Since chastening is inevitable, the author used the word *therefore* to call on believers to respond positively to the experience. Quoting from Isaiah 55:3, he said, “Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed” (Heb. 12:12–13).

The verses describe someone about to collapse physically, spiritually, and emotionally from the chastening; and they exhort the individual not to faint from exhaustion under it. He is to make sure his feet stay on the “straight paths” because if he veers off onto a rough, bumpy path in his fatigued state, he could easily dislocate (turn or twist out of joint) his leg or foot, disqualifying him from the race.

In other words, the spiritually weak Jewish believers who were being persecuted were ready to return to their Jewish roots and needed an inner resolve to stay the course in their new faith. If they stayed the course, remained under God’s discipline with a correct attitude, and looked to Him for strength to endure the persecution, He would heal them and bring them through victoriously.

Then the author admonished them, “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (vv. 14–15).

The word *pursue* means to try eagerly and earnestly to seek “peace” and “holiness” with “all people,” whether Christians or those who persecute them. The word *holiness* involves the believer’s sanctification in two ways: positional and progressive. Christians possess positional sanctification before God immediately upon receiving Christ as Savior. Yet they are being progressively sanctified through daily obedience to God’s commands. People who earnestly seek peace and holiness demonstrate they are true believers and, as such, “will see the Lord.”

The author warns Christians regarding their responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their fellow believers. They are to be “looking carefully” (see or give oversight, v. 15) with due diligence over their spiritual lives and attitudes toward others within the congregation for three reasons:

1. “Lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (v. 15). Some interpret the phrase to refer to a person who professes faith in Christ but falls short of salvation because of persecution. In context, the phrase refers to believers who fail to appreciate and appropriate God’s grace, especially during persecution. Failing to do so makes Christ inoperative in one’s spiritual walk and can result in falling from grace (cf. Gal. 5:4) or being severed from the blessings and fellowship of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

2. “Lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (Heb. 12:15). Failing to appropriate God’s grace during persecution and suffering can lead to bitterness that will be manifested through actions and words. Bitterness eventually poisons the congregation; and “many become defiled,” often causing major divisions and schisms. The phrase is quoted from Deuteronomy 29:18 to illustrate how bitterness corrupted Israel in the wilderness and led to discouragement and idolatry.

3. “Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright” (Heb. 12:16; cf. Gen. 25:27–34). Esau is singled out to drive home the point. Scripture never calls Esau a “fornicator” (sexually immoral), although he probably was because of his involvement with heathen women. The word can be taken metaphorically, describing him as “profane” (unholy, irreligious, godless), having no regard for spiritual things and viewing them with contempt.

Esau was in line to inherit the birthright and attendant blessings; but being a secular man, he cared nothing about such things or his privileges from God. Instead, he trampled them underfoot. He sold his birthright for a “morsel of food,” a paltry price for a priceless treasure. Though he forfeited his birthright and blessing, his sonship remained.

After seeing his error, Esau wanted the birthright and blessing back; but “he was rejected, for he found no place [opportunity] for repentance [a change of mind], though he sought it diligently with tears” (Heb. 12:17). Esau was rejected because his decision was irrevocable.

The illustration of Esau’s willingness to forfeit his birthright and blessing sent a pointed and chilling message to Jewish believers. Their birthright was provided at Christ’s expense through His sacrifice on the cross. To return to their Jewish roots would forever cut them off from blessing and, ultimately, from maturity in Christ.

As believers, we must persevere through chastening and persecution because, in the end, God will bless us and bring us to maturity in Jesus.

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
The previous article focused on God’s eleos mercy as related to eternal salvation. Now we will examine other relationships of God’s mercy expressed through the Greek New Testament words eleos, oiktirmos, and splagxnon.

**God’s Eleos Mercy**

In Greek, eleos referred to “the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else” and, therefore, of “sympathy” for the victim.¹

God’s eleos mercy related to His wisdom. James 3:13—4:3 contrasts two types of wisdom. The first type has three sources: (1) “human philosophy”;; (2) “the life of the natural world and whatever belongs to it, in contrast to the supernatural world,”³ and therefore claims the highest good is the development of mankind or oneself, not God and His glory; and (3) the demonic realm—the part of the angelic spirit realm that rebelled against God in the ancient past and remains in permanent opposition to Him (3:15).

This kind of wisdom is characterized by “bitter envy” and “selfish ambition”⁴ in one’s heart, “disorder,”⁵ every “worthless”⁶ thing, “conflicts,”⁷ “quarrels,”⁸ and even “murder”⁹ (vv. 3:14–16; 4:1–2). These traits imply such wisdom does not generate or promote mercy.

By contrast, the second type of wisdom is “from above” (3:17). Its source is God the Father (1:17). It is “pious wisdom which avoids all self-seeking”¹⁰ and is “peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (3:17).

God’s eleos mercy related to Paul’s ministry. Paul called himself “one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy” (1 Cor. 7:25). He also said, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, we do not lose heart” (2 Cor. 4:1).

God’s eleos mercy related to preserving a life and preventing sorrow. Paul wrote the following to believers at Philippi:

> Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow (Phil. 2:25–27).

God’s eleos mercy related to requested blessing for a faithful friend and his household. When Paul was in prison, he requested the following:

> The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus (2 Tim. 1:16–18).

God’s eleos mercy related to people who live in accord with the rule that their new spiritual birth is (1) based exclusively on the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ and (2) has nothing to do with their ethnic background. Paul wrote,

> But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:14–16).

God’s eleos mercy related to people who, in time of need, come boldly to God through prayer:

> Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that
we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14–16).

God’s eleos mercy related to His authority. Paul quoted the following statement that God made to Moses: “I will have mercy on whomsoever I will have mercy” (Rom. 9:15). The words translated “mercy” are verbs derived from the noun eleos. God’s statement to Moses indicated He exclusively has complete authority over His administration of mercy.

God’s eleos mercy related to greetings. Paul sent the following greeting to Timothy: “Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Tim. 1:2; cf. 2 Tim. 1:2). John sent the following greeting to the elect lady and her children: “Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father” (2 Jn. 3). Jude sent the following greeting to believers: “Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you” (Jude 2).

God’s Oiktirmos Mercy

The Greek word oiktirmos communicated “pity, mercy, compassion.”

God’s oiktirmos mercy related to Christian commitment. In light of God’s compassionate mercies toward sinners who became saved, Paul exhorted them to present their bodies to God as living sacrifices for His service: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies to God as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). The word translated “mercies” is oiktirmo.

God’s personal relationship to oiktirmos mercy. Paul said the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation” (2 Cor. 1:3–4). The word translated “mercies” is oiktirmo.

God’s oiktirmos mercy relationship to believers who persevere and endure through trying situations. James used the example of Job: “Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” (Jas. 5:11). The word translated “merciful” is oiktirmo.

God’s oiktirmos mercy related to greetings. Paul quoted the following statement God made to Moses: “I will have mercy on whomsoever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomsoever I will have compassion” (Rom. 9:15). The words translated “compassion” are oiktireo and oiktiro. Both are verbs derived from the noun oiktirmo.

Endnotes


3 Ibid., “psuxikos,” 902.


5 Ibid., “akatastasia,” 29.

6 Ibid., “phantulos,” 862.

7 Ibid., “polemus,” 691.

8 Ibid., “maxe,” 497.

9 Ibid., “phoneus,” 872.

10 Friedrich Hauck, “agnos,” TDNT, 1:122.

11 Arndt and Gingrich, “oiktirmos,” 564.

12 Ibid., “splagxnon,” 770.


Renald E. Showers is an author and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
Delta calls Israel occupied territory

Legal activists gave Delta Airlines a recent lesson in geography—and law—after its frequent-flyer program website referred to Ben Gurion airport in Lod outside Tel Aviv as “Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

“Effectively Delta says that if you want to fly from Occupied Palestinian Territory to another place, you need a certain number of miles,” a reader told Arutz-7. Ben Gurion Airport is within the 1949 Armistice lines. The civil rights group Shurat HaDin (Israel Law Center) called Delta and said the airline “removed the inaccurate language from its website.”

Terrorist on tour

A Hamas terrorist who helped bomb the Cafe Hillel in Jerusalem returned to cheering crowds in Gaza recently after an “apartheid week” tour in South Africa. Abd al-Azziz Muhammad Moussa Amr, released as part of the deal to free Gilad Shalit, went to South Africa to use his story in the propaganda war against Israel.

Al-Azziz was born in 1960 in Jerusalem. Blind from the age of 20, he completed his undergraduate studies at Bir Zeit University and obtained a Ph.D. in English literature at Hebrew University. At Bir Zeit he fell in with a suicide bomber who killed nine and wounded 50 when he blew himself up in Cafe Hillel in September 2003.

Both were part of a Hamas terror cell that planned and orchestrated the attack. Al-Azziz was sentenced to seven life sentences plus 30 years but was released in October 2011 and exiled to Hamas-ruled Gaza.

In interviews, he refused to answer questions about his conviction in the bombing. His trip was underwritten by two Hamas affiliates, the al-Quds Foundation and Muslim Judicial Council.

PA declares church illegal

One week after Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told an audience of evangelical Protestants his government respects the rights of its Christian minorities, the PA declared a Baptist Church in Bethlehem unlawful and said the church will no longer receive rights as a religious institution.

“They said they will not recognize any legal paperwork from our church. That includes birth certificates, wedding certificates, and death certificates. Children are not even considered to be legitimate if they don’t have recognized paperwork,” said an assistant pastor at the First Baptist Church.

Pastor Naim Khoury said animosity toward the Christian minority in PA-controlled areas continues to get worse.

War threat scares investors

Talk of war with Iran is scaring investors away from Israel even though the country’s growing economy and hi-tech industry are considered a gold mine, reported Calcalist, a business newspaper published in Israel.

“We Israelis do not recognize the concept of risk. We live here and raise our children here. But the situation with Iran is a top priority for every investor today,” Yuval Cohen, head of a top investment in Israel, told Calcalist. “We are all optimistic here. But at dinner, when you sit with investors, you hear their doubts. We look not good.”

Despite fears, many agree Israel is a good bet for foreign investors. Israel boasts more companies on New York’s NASDAQ exchange than any other country outside the United States and Canada. American hi-tech companies have gobbled up Israeli companies at a startling rate, and the New Jersey-based Avaya video conferencing company is set to snap up Israel’s Radivision for $225 million, Globes reported.

Terrorist gets TV talk show

Hamas has shown its pride in terrorist Ahlam Tamimi by giving her a weekly talk show focusing on terrorists imprisoned in Israel. It is broadcast on al-Quds TV and is heavily promoted.

Tamimi took part in bombing the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem in 2001, killing 15 people—seven of them children. She has expressed pride in her role, telling a Jordanian interviewer, “I dedicated myself to the path of jihad for the sake of Allah. . . . I would do it again.”

She was freed in 2011 as part of the mass prisoner release in exchange for captive Israel Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit.

Jobless rate drops in Israel

Looking for work? Come to Israel! The jobless rate dropped to 5.4 percent in the last quarter, one of the lowest in the world and the lowest in Israel in 30 years.

By contrast, the unemployment rate in the United States is 8.5 percent and is actually estimated to be twice as high because millions of people have given up looking for work. Statistics are based on those looking for employment.

Hi-tech employees make up slightly more than 10 percent of the Israeli workforce. Expansion of American-based firms’ Israeli operations has opened up hundreds of jobs, led by Intel. Microsoft and Google also have invested heavily in new tech centers in Israel.

Israel passes anorexia law

The Knesset has passed a law banning the use of underweight models for commercial advertising. MK Rachel Adatto said, “This law shatters the ideal of anorexic beauty, which has served as a model for the country’s young people who have tried to imitate this impossible illusion and have suffered from eating disorders as a result. . . . There is such a thing as being too thin.”

Models with a body mass index lower than 18.5 will not qualify to appear in advertisements in Israel.

All reports by Arutz-7 (IsraelNationalNews.com).
Making a Will That Works

Each day we are given opportunities to glorify God. Using our time well, exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, and making wise use of our finances are a few of the many ways we can honor Him. Another way is by making sure what the Lord has entrusted to us remains His when we no longer need it.

Sadly, if you have no legal will in force, the laws of your state will intercede and make a will for you when the time comes. Does your state know how you want your estate handled? Unfortunately, your desire to see the Lord’s work benefited is likely to go unfulfilled.

If you would like to have a will written but don’t know where to start, let us help. We would like to send you our informative brochure Making a Will That Works at no cost and without obligation. It is our way of helping you become a wise steward over all the Lord has entrusted to you. To receive Making a Will That Works, simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine; or write to Tom Geoghan at The Friends of Israel, P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099.

ENDNOTES


3 Ibid., pp. 3–4.
Many Orthodox people here in Jerusalem have known me a long time. Sometimes it seems they almost have a competition to see who among them can put me down and become a hero. Often they come to my home to talk about faith. At first they are friendly. But then they become agitated and are not so nice.

I know my obligation before the Lord. It is to teach them the truth about the Bible and the Lord our Savior. But the truth is not something they are accustomed to hearing.

Recently several ultra-Orthodox men came to my home and, as always, were nice at the beginning. But as time passed, they realized things were not going as they had planned; then they were not so nice. Even the expressions on their faces changed from pleasant to angry, and they began hollering at me in high-pitched voices.

"Why do you make friends with those who believe in This One [meaning Jesus]? They are against us. And you bow down before Him! We have come here because we want to know why you do these things. We are waiting for your answer!"

They were sure they would win their argument with me and that I would throw them out of my home. But it was not to be. "I am very happy you came here because you want to know about This One in whom I have believed," I replied. "So I am happy to give you the answers you seek."

"But only from the Bible!" one demanded, confident I could not show him anything about the Lord Jesus Christ from the Jewish Scriptures.

"First of all, I am sure you want to know where it is written about This One in the Bible," I said. "Have you brought with you a Bible?"

"No," one replied.

"Do not worry," I told them. "Here is a Bible. Have a good look and see if this is like the Bible you read every day."

They took the Bible and turned it around and around, examining it from every angle. Finally one said, "Yes, this is kosher [acceptable]."

"Now open it to Isaiah chapter 53 and read verses 5–6. And when you finish, we will look at more verses," I told them. So they read,

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\text{But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.}
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Their faces became even more agitated. "Now," I continued, "please read this verse from Micah." So they read,

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\text{But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (5:2).}
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"This is very interesting," one said. "We have spent much time learning from our great rabbis. We have spent most of our lives studying this Holy
Bible. Yet now we stand before such a one as you who is so far away from this Book, and what you said we have never heard. Why?” They spoke among themselves for a long time, asking each other why they never saw these verses before. “Can it be that this one is telling us something we do not know?” they asked each other.

The Orthodox often believe they know more about the Bible than non-Orthodox Jews know. So they certainly believe they know more than someone who believes in Jesus. Learning something new from me was almost more than they could bear.

“Where have you learned what you tell us about This One? Who was your teacher?” one asked.

“Those who believe the truth do not spend most of their lives listening to fictitious stories told by teachers,” I said. “They do not revere their teachers above God’s Holy Word. I have learned about God’s truth and about Him in whom I have believed from the Holy Bible. Here, you see it in black and white before you.

“Sadly, you are blind and know nothing about our Father in heaven. It is clearly written in Deuteronomy chapter 6, which you read every morning: ‘Fear the Lord your God and serve Him. (For the Lord your God is a jealous God)’ [vv. 13, 15]. So now I ask you, Whom are you following? God or your teacher?’ This time they were very surprised. Several times they asked, “Who was your teacher?” They are obsessed with following a teacher.

Then they asked again, “But how did you come to believe in This One?” Finally I replied, “You see how blind you are? You have now read the verses for yourselves and still do not understand that I have believed in the One about whom it is written in the Holy Bible. And you are determined to do what is against the Word of the Lord.”

We had a nice conversation, but they live in deep darkness. Please pray they will see the light of the Lord.

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